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HISTORY  
OF  
GERMAN LITERATURE.

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HISTORY

OF

GERMAN LITERATURE.

BASED ON THE GERMAN WORK OF VILMAR.

BY THE

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE work on which the following pages are based has reached a sixth edition within a short period of time, and enjoys a high reputation in Germany. That portion which treats of the Heroic Sagas is considered superior to anything that has been written on the subject. Its author, Vilmar, held an office in the Department of Public Worship and Education, under the notorious Hessian minister, Hassenpflug. According to the German papers, he belongs to that party in Germany which stands up for the national Lutheranism as opposed to the foreign Calvinism. These views, which Vilmar advocated with great vigour, excited odium in some quarters; and on the disgrace and downfall of Hassenpflug, Vilmar's retirement was greeted with loud jubilee by the democrats, who stigmatised him as a tyrant and represser of national liberty. Since then, he has been Professor of Theology at Marburg. In many respects, Vilmar's work (which, it is only fair to say, exhibits no leaning towards despotism, civil or ecclesiastical) surpasses those of his predecessors on the same subject. With more enthusiasm for his theme, and a fresher style than Gervinus, he is less minute and matter-of-fact than



Koberstein, though sufficiently so for a foreign student.

Still, with all its excellences, the Editor of the following pages felt convinced that the German work would not suit the English reader in the shape of a regular translation. It is in vain to deny it; but anything approaching to a faithful translation from the German is distasteful to English readers. The idioms of the two languages cannot be made to correspond. The ways of thought, too, of the two nations are as diverse as the poles asunder. While the Englishman, rather than get too deep, becomes at times superficial, the German *literati* are often so profound that they stir up the mud at the bottom, and become obscure. It may be that Germany is the officina, where half the thought of Europe is elaborated; but this officina is like the workshop of the ingenious mechanic, which contains many useful articles mixed up with articles of no use at all. That great padlock, for instance, vast and ponderous, hanging before the door, which is a mere dummy; this knife, with 365 blades, which can be of no practical use; this snuff-box, out of which springs a miniature bird and warbles pleasantly, but not half so well as a real feathered songster; this complex machine for measuring the height of the clouds, which can only be properly used when the experimenter is himself *in nubibus*. A German period is often like an Indian army, with its baggage train, its cooks, its bearers, its what-not, all clogging the free motion of the advancing force. Instead of keeping along the



high road of thought, a German writer must dive every moment into a side lane, so that, besides the main idea of a sentence, we are introduced to all its cousins—*German* and distant relatives. These may be very interesting people indeed, but we get positively tired of the multitudinous family. The very best German learned writers—it is of them exclusively that we venture to make these remarks—keep a sort of circumlocution office. With a language approaching to the Greek in flexibility, they make it appear to the very worst advantage. Bishop Hoadly's "periods of a mile" were as nothing to German sentences in length and involution. In fact, to render a German work available to the English public, an Englishman must bring to bear upon it something like a Berdoe's quartz-crushing machine; pulverise the huge mass, and disintegrate it, in order to get at the residuum of really fine gold. On comparing this English volume with the original, it will be found that the Editor has had recourse to this kind of expedient, getting rid, as much as possible, of the earthy particles, and using rather violent measures to accomplish this, but retaining to the best of his power the fine metal, of which there was rich abundance.

With regard to the scope of Vilmar's work, it will be sufficient to say that the Author has by no means followed an exhaustive process, or given a history of each and all of the different literary products of Germany. On the contrary, he has confined his attention for the most part to those works which, in subject-matter and form, seem to reflect most faithfully the

national characteristics of his countrymen, in their mode of thought, their inner life, their manners, and the spirit of each succeeding age.

With this object, he has mainly, as might have been expected, addressed himself to the poetical works — especially the earlier ones — of Germany, as best illustrating these various matters.

It is a remarkable fact, and one which has often been lost sight of, that at a very remote period Germany possessed a grand national Epic. Long before Tasso and Ariosto, Dante, or Petrarch, or Shakespeare, let alone Goethe or Schiller, were thought of, Germany had poets like Walther von der Vogelweide and Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Epics such as “Gudrun” and the “Nibelungenlied.”

Vilmar divides his history into three periods : —

I. The Oldest Period.

II. The Old Period.

III. The New Period.

The First of these Periods he makes to commence at the middle of the fourth century, and go down to the year 1150. During this period occurred the struggle between Heathenism and Christianity.

The Second Period reaches from 1150 to 1624. During this period we see German Nationalism amalgamated with Christianity into one harmonious whole.

This Period is classed by the author under the following subdivisions : —

1. The Period of Preparation, 1150—1190.

2. The Classical Period, or Period of National Epic and the Minnesingers, 1190—1300, when German literature reached its zenith.

3. The Period of the decay and decadence of Poetry, 1300—1517 (about); the period when the Reformation may be said to have commenced.

4. The Period of the struggle between the new ideas and the old notions, when foreign culture was ousting national culture, 1517—1624.

The New Period begins in 1624, when German Christian elements were now thoroughly interpenetrated and amalgamated with foreign elements.

To this Period he also assigns a threefold subdivision : —

1. The Period when the foreign domineered over the domestic; the age of learned poetry, 1624—1720, *i. e.* from Opitz to the first appearance of Bodmer.

2. The preparation of a new state of independence, 1720—1760.

3. The Second Classical Period, beginning with Klopstock, and ending 22d March 1832, the day of Goethe's death.

With regard to the two volumes now presented to the English public, it will be proper to state that it was thought best that this work and the companion one by Professor Max Müller should be in two distinct volumes; so that the English narrative might not be broken by the interposition of lengthy passages from the writings of the authors described.

The march of the story in the first volume, descrip-

tive of each succeeding author, his times, &c., will be found to keep pace with the successive specimens of their works exhibited in the second.

While the second volume is a spacious gallery lined with a long vista of carefully selected works of art of various degrees of merit, with the date and name of each author appended to the frames—from the “Nibelungenlied” and “Gudrun,” by the Cimabues and Giotto of the bright dawn of German literary art, to Schiller and Goethe, its Angelos and Titians,—the first volume is a sort of *catalogue raisonné*, showing when and where and how the individual writers lived and moved and had their being;—what schools they founded or belonged to; the character and scope of their works; their influence upon their age, its customs, manners, and habits of thought; and the influence it, in its turn, exercised upon them.

By this method of arrangement it is hoped that the twin works will prove more comprehensive and clear, and therefore more useful and instructive, than any on the same subject that have appeared in this country.

It only remains to add, that the notes have been removed from the end of the book to the foot of the page to which they refer.

Lincoln College, Oxford, May, 1858.

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# HISTORY

OF

## GERMAN LITERATURE.

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### THE OLDEST PERIOD.

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THE translation of the Bible by the Gothic Bishop Ulfilas is the most ancient monument of German literature in existence. Between it and all subsequent literary productions there is an interval of at least three hundred years. Upon this work a science entirely modern has been constructed, namely, that of German etymology and historical grammar. Indeed, the comprehension not only of the old High German, but also of the middle High German poems depends in a great measure upon a knowledge of Gothic.

Ulfilas was bishop of the Western Goths, and died A.D. 388, in the seventieth year of his age\*, after crown-

\* Professor G. Waitz found in a manuscript, belonging most probably to the fourth century, and preserved in Paris, some polemical observations of a certain Arian bishop, Maximinus, against the Council of Aquileia (A.D. 381). In this book, which must have been committed to writing before the year 397, there was inserted an independent treatise by Bishop Auxentius, of Dorostor (Silistria), upon the life of Ulfilas.

ing his faithful labours as a Christian instructor by the translation of the Bible into Gothic. According to tradition, the only parts of it which he did not translate were the Books of Kings and Chronicles, for fear of rousing thereby the martial propensities of his people.

For the prosecution of this work there is some reason to suppose that he invented a peculiar alphabet, partly Old German, partly borrowed from the Greek. For centuries this production was held in high estimation by the West Goths, as they advanced first into Italy, and then into Spain; and its language was still understood as late as the ninth century. After this it was lost; and all that was known of it was from the notices

In his earliest years Auxentius was entrusted by his parents to Ulfilas, who instructed him in the Bible. See G. Waitz, "Ueber das Leben und die Lehre des Ulfila. Hannover, 1840." Up to this period (1840) people had not got beyond the indistinct surmise that Ulfilas was bishop, and wrote his work between 360 and 380 (*see* Gabelentz et Loebe Ulfilas, "Veteris et Novi Testamenti Versionis Gothicæ Fragmenta quæ supersunt," &c., 1836 and 1843, Proleg. p. 1). But we learn from Auxentius' account, that Ulfilas was consecrated bishop of the Goths in the year 348.

The Gospels were first published from the Silver Codex by Franz Junius, Dordrecht, 1665, and frequently afterwards. In 1805, at Weiszenfels, by Zahn, together with the fragments discovered by Knittel at Wolfenbüttel. The Pauline Epistles, by Mai and Castiglioni, Milan, 1819-1839, and a Gothic exposition of the Gospel of St. John, under the title "Skeireins," by Massmann, in 1834. The above cited work of Gabelentz and Loebe contains all the memorials of the Gothic language. Comp. Massmann, *Gothica Minora* in Haupt's "Zeitschrift für das deutsche Alterthum," 1, 294, *seq.*

It has been photographed by Dr. Leo, of Berlin; and a new edition has lately appeared at Berlin by Professor Massmann, with a literal rendering into Greek and Latin notes, a vocabulary, and an historical introduction.—*Editor.*

of Greek ecclesiastical writers, who stated that a translation of the Bible had once been made by a certain Ulfilas. Six hundred years had elapsed when, towards the close of the sixteenth century, one Arnold Mercator, a Belgian geometrician in the service of Wilhelm IV., Landgrave of Hussia, spread abroad the rumour that a very ancient German translation of the four Gospels, written on parchment, was to be found in the abbey of Werden. This precious MS. subsequently got to Prague, and upon the capture of that city by Count Königsmark, A.D. 1648, was conveyed to Sweden, where it is still preserved in the library of Upsala, under the name of the Codex Argenteus. The letters are written in silver upon purple vellum; and the whole is bound in silver by the generosity of the Swedish Marshal Lagardie. Two hundred and fifty years later, viz., A.D. 1818, the Epistles of St. Paul, translated by Ulfilas, were discovered by Cardinal Mai and Count Castiglioni in the monastery of Bobbio in Lombardy. Of the translation of the Old Testament nothing but a few lines remain. The language of this venerable relic is the mother of the present High-German, as it is called; which, if superior to its progenitor in the flexibility and flow of its sentences, is vastly inferior to it in the purity and euphony of its vowels, its grammatical strictness, the wealth and fulness of its forms, variety and accuracy of expression; and above all, in point of earnestness and dignity. It was when this work was drawn to light, after being hidden for a thousand years, and not before, that people began to obtain a true insight into the German language.

Of the many who have investigated this most perfect and most interesting language, Jacob Grimm has shown himself to be the interpreter most worthy of the theme.

With this short preamble we shall proceed to describe the commencement of German Poetry.

Julian the Apostate relates that he heard the Germans on the Rhine singing their national songs, and that these sounded to him just like the cries of screaming birds of prey. Following him, many of the moderns, especially Adelung, the compiler of the well-known German Dictionary, have been of opinion that early German poetry, like the people themselves, was essentially rude and barbarous, and only attained to a higher perfection as the people progressed in civilisation. But this opinion is a wrong one. It is at the outset of a people's existence as a nation that its poetry is always most noble and most natural. When, in the course of ages, the poetry of a nation has used up its most ancient materials, when it begins to grow tired of itself, and to cast about at random for some new theme instead of taking that which is most obvious and natural, when the popular taste has become vitiated by intellectual over-refinement,—then it is that a people's poetry is in danger of sinking into barbarism and ruin.

Traditions have come down to us from the very earliest times of lays current in ancient Germany in honour of her kings and victorious heroes. According to Tacitus, the Germans celebrated in songs, which were ancient even in his time, the praises of Tuisco,

the son of Earth, and his son Mannus; they had battle hymns in honour of the God of War or of Victory, whom that author calls Hercules, but who was probably the God Sachsnot, or Ziu. And lastly, he relates how that Arminius, the liberator of Northern Germany, and his victory over Varus in the Teutoburg Forest, were still renowned in song one hundred years after that event. But all these songs disappeared together with the Cheruscan tribe to whom they belonged; and it was reserved for a Roman to preserve the memory of Arminius to his country. The old heroic songs of the Gothic Kings, Berig and Filumer, which still existed among that people in the sixth century, and from which all their ancient history is derived, have likewise disappeared.

Two legends, however, of heathen times, and dating as far back, at least, as the fourth century, are still extant. One of these is the Heroic-Saga, or Mythus of Sigfried, the Dragon Slayer, or the Horny \* Sigfried; the other is the Animal-Saga of Reynard the Fox and Isegrim the Wolf, both of which have lived on in unimpaired vitality through centuries; and have been worked up into regular poems by some of the greatest poets. The story of Sigfried, the bright hero, who, while still a boy, forged his mighty sword, Bal-mung, at the traitorous smith's in the depths of the primæval forest, who slew the gold-guarding dragon Frasnir, liberated the Valkyre Brunhild from the ever-

\* Sigfried bathed in the blood of the dragon, and his skin thereby became hard as horn, except in one spot, where a leaf intervened.—*Editor.*

flaming castle, and perished by treachery in the midst of his blazing career of glory—evidently refers to a period when German heathenism still subsisted in all its natural vigour, and the tranquil days of old were as yet undisturbed by the so-called migration of the nations. Impelled by this latter movement, the Saga was borne from Germany to the kindred countries of the north, to Norway and Iceland, where it was preserved in its old mythic shape; while in the country of its birth, it lost, under the modifying influences of Christianity, most of its heathen and mythic character. Thus metamorphosed, it forms the first part of the “Nibelungenlied,” of which more hereafter.

The Saga of Reynard the Fox and Isegrim the Wolf is clearly one, which could only have originated when a people was in a state of primæval simplicity, and when man and beast lived together in child-like familiarity. But in the name used for the fox we have a striking proof that this must have been the case, and that the Franks of the fifth century must have brought this Saga with them over the Rhine to France; for the fox is called in the Saga Reginhart (*i.e.* the prudent counsellor, the cunning), which has been modernized into Reinhart, or the Low German diminutive, Reineke. And this old German name, Reinhart, or Reynard, has entirely superseded the old French name of the beast, *Goupil*. But this never could have taken place except at a period when the language of the Franks was the prevailing language of Gaul, and when the meaning of the word (Reinhart) was still perfectly current,



which ceased to be the case, in Germany at least, as early as the eighth century.

When the nations began to migrate, heroes of greater and greater renown march into the scene of song. First come the Kings of the East Goths of the Amalian line, Ermanarich and his nephew, called in history Theodoric the Great, and in the Saga Dietrich of Bern, after Sigfrid, the most renowned of the German heroes. Then the race of the Wolfings, Dietrich's vassals; the most conspicuous of whom are Dietrich's aged retainer, Hildebrand, and his son Hadubrand. After these follow the Burgundian Kings, Gunther, Gieselher, and Gernot, with their sister Kriemhild, the virgin full of grace and modesty, the devoted wife, the widow bloodthirsty and revengeful; and in her train, the grim and terrible, yet withal noble, Hagen of Tronei, with his grey hair and fierce countenance. Then we have Attila, King of the Huns, called Etzel in the Saga. Among his attendants is the Margrave Rudiger of Bechlarn, the most profound creation of German feeling, who has gone through the double struggle, first of soul then of body. And, lastly, Walther of Wasichenstein or of Aquitaine, who fled from Attila with Hildegunde, his betrothed, and in his flight had the terrible contest with the king of the Burgundians at Wasichenstein (the Vosges). Besides these there are from the North of Germany, Hettel, king of the Frieses or Hegelings, with his daughter Gudrun, the faithful bride; also the Stormarn or Danish King,

Horant, the sweet singer, with his uncle Wate, the hero with the ell-broad beard, who rages in battle like a wild boar, with his rolling eyes and gnashing tusks. On the other side are the Norman Kings Ludwig and Hartmut, and, lastly, Beovulf, king of the Jutes, whose Saga the Angles carried over to Britain in the fifth century, where it was committed to writing in the eighth.

We know from numerous testimonies that as early as the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries bold tuneful songs passed from mouth to mouth, descriptive of these heroes, their deeds, and their fortunes.

In the halls of kings, and in the chambers where the heroes sat, minstrels sang these well-known lays, the crowd of guests accompanying the strain. Many of these compositions were written down by the monks, partly as a pastime, partly by way of grammatical exercise. Thus, in the year 821, the monastery of Reichenau, on the Lake of Constance, possessed twelve of them. Eginhard relates that Charlemagne caused a collection of them to be made; but all the efforts that have been made for centuries to discover these collections have hitherto been unsuccessful.

It is true that we do possess these lays in another shape; but this is in the modern version of the thirteenth century, and not in the ancient form of the eighth and ninth. Besides these, there are only three other pieces extant belonging to the ancient period. Of which only one is in the original Old High German, another is in a Latin translation, and the third is in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. None of these owe their preser-

vation to the care of Charlemagne. On the contrary, it was by a lucky accident that the most important of the three, the poem of Hildebrand and his son Hadubrand, has come down to us. It is written in Old High German, with an occasional tendency to the Low German dialect; and belongs to the cyclus of Sagas on Dietrich of Bern. The story is a kind of sequel to that of the Nibelungenlied. Dietrich, together with Hildebrand, has been thirty years from home in the land of the king of the Huns. He has now returned to his country after the great contest in which all the Burgundians, and, at last, Kriemhild herself, the lovely and terrible, the widow of Sigfrid and wife of Attila, have fallen. He has gained the victory also over Otacher (Odoacer), the leader of his domestic foes. Hildebrand is still his companion; who, when he started from home, left behind him a young wife and infant son. This son is Hadubrand, now a doughty warrior, who, not knowing his father, advances to meet him as a foe. Hildebrand recognises his son, and seeks to deter him from the attack; but in vain. "Dead is Hildebrand, my sire, the son of Heriband," replies the youth; "sailors have told me so, who came over the Wendelsee (Mediterranean sea)." Hildebrand unwinds his golden armlets, the fairest and most coveted ornaments of a German warrior, and offers them to his son. But the stripling answers defiantly, "With the lance (Ger) must thy gifts be received: sword-point to sword-point. Thou art a sly old Hun, who seekest to entrap me to my ruin." "Alas! great God," cries Hildebrand, "woe is me. Sixty summers and winters

have I been a wanderer from home ; and now shall my dear son hew me with his sword, or else I be his murderer. Yet craven were he, most craven of the men of Ostland (the East-Goths), who should withhold thee from the strife thou so lustest for." Hereupon father and son first hurled their lances of ash, fixing them deeply the one into the other's shield. Then the shield-splitters rush on each other, hewing so fiercely with their brands, that the linden-wood shields grow smaller and smaller at each stroke. Here the poem, which is unfortunately only a fragment, breaks off. The remainder of the story still exists, it is true, but not in the same antique shape. Seven hundred years later, viz., at the end of the fifteenth century, this epic legend, which had been passed on from mouth to mouth, was again versified with some success by a popular poet, Kaspar Von der Roen, under the title of "Der Vater mit dem Sohne" (the Father and his Son). This poem, which wants the power of the original, is to be found in Wackernagel's and other collections. The upshot of the story was that the father conquered the son, and then both return to the lonely wife and mother.

This poem, which, next to the work of Ulfilas, is the most remarkable remnant of the oldest German literature, owes its preservation to two monks of the monastery of Fulda, who lived at the beginning of the ninth century. It is not unlikely that they had formerly been in the army, and that this was one of the reminiscences of their secular days, which in their leisure hours they committed to writing. It is inscribed upon the blank pages at the beginning and end of a religious work, and is in two different hands, as if one had written

and the other dictated it alternately. This rare manuscript has been preserved, since the thirty years' war, in the museum of Cassel.\*

The second specimen of that age, which, as aforesaid, is only a Latin translation, dates from the beginning of the tenth century. It is a pithy and life-like history of Walther of Aquitaine, and his deadly contest with Gunthar, king of the Burgundians, and his men of war, in a defile of the Vosges, through which passed the ancient highway.† Twelve champions, one after another, attack the hero, and try to rob him of the treasures he had brought from the land of the Huns, and of Hildegund, his betrothed, who had escaped from Attila, by whom she had been detained as a hostage. Each struggle is depicted with much individuality and freshness. Each warrior wears different arms, and though Walther comes off conqueror in every case, yet each victory differs from the other; so that the interest is sustained throughout, down to his last tremendous

\* The "Hildebrandslied" was first printed in 1729 by G. V. Eckhart, in his "Commentarii de Rebus Franciæ Orientalis," i. pp. 864-902. But then, and long afterwards, it was looked upon as "a romance in prose," until at length, in 1812, the poetic form of alliteration was pointed out by the Brothers Grimm, "Die beiden ältesten alliterierenden Gedichte, das Hildebrandslied und das Wessobrunner Gebet." W. Grimm published an exact fac-simile of the MS. in 1830, in two folio leaves, while in 1833 Lachmann edited an acute and comprehensive explanation of the restored text. See "Histor.-philol. Abhandlungen der Berliner Academie der Wissenschaften," 1835, pp. 123-162. Wilhelm Müller has recently endeavoured to put this poem in the Strophe form. See Haupt's Zeitschr. iii. pp. 447-452.

† Edited for the last time, and first explained by J. Grimm, in the "Lateinische Gedichte des 10 und 11 Jarh. von Grimm und Schmeller," 1838, pp. 3-53, the explanations, pp. 54-126, and in the preface.

fight with Hagen of Tronei, with whom he had once lived as with a brother, at the court of Etzel. It is true that the contest bears an air of bloodthirstiness and rude ferocity. King Gunthar loses a foot, Walther a hand, Hagen an eye and some of his teeth; but when the fight is done and peace concluded, these mutilations give rise to much good-humoured jocularitv among the combatants. Walther returns home to his father, Alphari, at Lengers, celebrates his marriage with Hildegund, and on the demise of the former reigns as king for thirty years. Many of these contests remind one of those in Homer. The conclusion of the poem, descriptive of how Walther, all his battles over, ruled justly and lived tranquilly to the end of his days, finds no parallel in antique poetry, not even in the Odyssey. This peaceful end and aim of battles and expeditions is an essentially German idea.

In the third and last heroic poem, the Anglo-Saxon Beovulf, we have a good specimen of the uncommon vigour exhibited by old German poetry in the descriptions of nature, and still more so in those of battles. Here are described the heroic deeds of Beovulf, king of the Jutes, and above all, his murderous fight with Grendel, the sea-monster, and his mother; and also his last contest with a dragon, in which he met his death. The piece abounds with episodes, one of which describes a known historical fact.\* An extract has been pub-

\* Beovulf was first edited by Thorkelin, Copenhagen, 1815. Then by John M. Kemble. The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beovulf, "The Traveller's Song," and "The Battle of Finnesburg," second edit. Lond., 1835, together with a translation of the Anglo-S. poem of Beovulf, with a copious glossary, 1837. The last edition is that by Thorpe; Parker, Oxford.



lished by Professor Leo, and a bad translation of it by Professor Etmüller at Zürich.

We shall now proceed to give a general view of this most ancient heroic poetry.

On the authority of Klopstock, a mythical notion sprung up, and for a long time prevailed in Germany, in the days when Ossian was the rage, that both the material and the form of this eldest poetry were the exclusive creation and possession of a school of bards. Suffice it to say, that there never was a minstrel caste, or a people called Bards, among the Germans. The thing, as well as the name, was purely Celtic. Poetry with the Germans was a national affair, and belonged not to individuals, but to the whole people. It described what all had equally experienced, seen, and felt; and when a poet stepped forward, it was not to describe a matter subjectively, *i. e.*, as it affected his own feelings individually. On the contrary, he was only the favoured organ through which that which was the common poetical property of the nation was expressed. What he said came home at once to the bosoms of all his hearers, and awoke their liveliest and deepest sympathies. The poets of those days did not labour after effect, in which the greatest strength of modern poetry consists. The Sagas above mentioned were not the result of individual invention. Some of them were the actual experiences of all the people; as, for instance, that of Hildebrand and Hadubrand, which is clearly an historical transaction, the details of which, down to the very fact of a dialogue having been held, are perhaps a faithful record of what actually occurred. Others,

again, were versions of occurrences commonly received and believed among the nation at large, at a period when there was no distinction between learned and unlearned, gentle and simple, but all, from the king to the humblest subject, spoke the same dialect, and were of the same way of thinking in all the essential matters and customs of life. The term Poet (*Dichter*) used above is hardly correct. Singer (*Sänger*) is the word more applicable to those days, when the popular ballads were not composed and written down (*dichten*, Latin *dictare*) by individuals, but lived on in the mouths of the people. In the royal halls the harp passed from hand to hand, and all could join in, at least in the most important passages. This singing together, which is a national characteristic of the Germans, is mentioned by Tacitus.

The Danish king Hroddgar, in the poem of *Beovulf*, himself grasps the harp and sings the deeds of his fathers. Horant, the Stormarn king, in the poem of *Gudrun*, makes the castle, which he had entered as warrior and hero, re-echo with his lay; while Volker, in the *Nibelunglied*, who yields to none in valour, surpasses all in song and minstrelsy. This it was which added so much to the pathos and interest of the song. The minstrel was telling the story of his own life, the battles he had won, the dangers he had endured. Not but what there were *also* professional singers, who had rich store of sagas about the different German tribes, and who wandered from court to court, where they received a hearty welcome and ample guerdon. In fact, the name of one of these has come down to us, the

blind Frisian, Bernlef, who was in the retinue of Ludger, Bishop of Münster, about the year 800. All that is contended for is, that these strolling minstrels did not make their ballads, much less invent the materials of them, but sung—as anybody else might and did sing—what was current in the living traditions of the people.

The very form of the most ancient German poetry is in the most intimate accordance with its subject-matter. Even to this day German versification depends entirely upon the accent, and not upon the quantity, as was the case among the Greeks and Romans. But in ancient times this essential principle was carried out much more strictly than now. The verse was then jointed by means of the most important words in it. These words were, so to say, the supports of the line, and were therefore called song staves (*Liedstäbe*), corresponding to one another by means of like initial letters. This form of verse, in which rhyme, properly so called, was unknown, was called alliterative or stave rhyme, from the three staves on which the line rested. Although this alliterative principle—this custom of connecting words belonging to each other by the same initial letters—has disappeared from German poetry these thousand years, and, from the very nature of the language, can never return, yet traces of it are still to be met with in many current proverbial expressions: *e. g.*, Wohl und Wehe, Haut und Haar, Land und Leute, Kind und Kegel, Schutz und Schirm, Stock und Stein. All the oldest heroic ballads, as, for instance, those of Hildebrand and Beovulf, were written in this alliterative verse.

When the song was sung, these alliterative words were musically emphasised, the company joining in by striking their swords upon their shields, or by uttering hollow sounds into the concave side of them, a custom mentioned by Tacitus. There was a noble simplicity and grandeur about the strain, which enthusiasts compare to the sound in the tree-tops of some dark forest struck by the evening wind. It is difficult now-a-days to form anything like a true idea of the imposing effect thus produced. Most of the attempts to re-introduce this sort of verse have failed; as for instance Rückert's "*Roland der Ries am Rathaus zu Bremen*." The following lines, however, from Fouque's "*Thiodolph*" have almost caught the right tone:—

" Weit im Weinberg,  
 Wohnen zwei Schwestern,  
 Kühn zwei Klingen  
 Zwischen Klippen starren.  
 Wenn die Schwestern wohnen  
 Wirtlich an einem Heerd  
 Wenn die Klingen klirren  
 Kräftig in einer Hand,"  
 etc.

It is nevertheless generally true that when the spirit has fled which created these natural sounds, all attempts at re-creating them must degenerate into mere empty form and artifice. This observation is borne out the otherwise successful verses of Karl Lappe. We subjoin a specimen from his "*Frostnacht*" (Frostnight):—

" Friede dir freudiger Frost der Nacht  
 Blinkende blanke Blume des Schnees!  
 Nordliche, nehmt nordischer Töne  
 Kräftigen Klang, kühn wie der Skalde!  
 Ströme nur Sturm, streng und kalt,

Mit herbem *Hauche* das *Haar* mir streifend  
*Mag* auch des *Maien* weiche *Milde*,  
 Die lispelden *Lüfte*, lind und Schlaff  
*Versteckte Veilchen*, *Vergissmeinnichte*,  
*Röthelnder Rosen* gefeierter *Ruhm*  
*All der Auen* athmender *Duft*  
 Der *Sinne* *Sehnen* sättigen immer?  
*Höheres heischet* des *Herzen's* Gelüst,  
*Will* auch der *Wonnen* *Wechsel* sehn!  
 Statt der sanften südlichen *Zier*  
*Strebt* er den starkenden *Stahl* zu trinken  
 Der köstlichen klaren *Kälte* *Becher*."

The ancient language was far richer in poetic appliances for this sort of verse than the modern. For instance, in one of the old German dialects there are eight different expressions for the idea "man," each of which was used according to the context. Thus, *uuerôs uuârum uuigeô an uuahtû* means "the men were watching the steeds;" *rincôs thes rikien sâtun an rûnum*, "the men of the mighty (Lord or King) sat in council;" *Segg* was in *selda undar gisindun*, "the man was at home among the followers;" *degano de-chisto* was *er Deodrihhe*, "most beloved of men was he to Dietrich." The language was equally rich in adjectives, which, as in the examples given above, were joined with substantives which had the same initial sound. Thus, the heroes were called *schnell*, *bald* (originally, *i. q.* *rasch*, *kühn*, *quick*, *bold*), *streng* (*stark-sehnig*, *strong-muscled*), *reich* (which originally also meant *mächtig*, *mighty*); then *hugi*, *derbi* (*sinnfest*, *resolute*); *ellanruof* (*kraft-berühmt*, *strength-renowned*); all of which epithets were characteristic of the different heroes. The usual German epithets for heroes now-a-days are

*tapfer*, which originally meant heavy, ponderous; but which has now lost all plastic signification; or *mutig*, which, in the ancient heroic language, signified angry, passionate. With them, *gross*, great, might be used as an epithet of the sea, or of a camel. They would also have said *gross* of hunger or necessity, but certainly not of a hero. Modern German is more supple, but it abounds in hyperbole and exaggeration, and wants the accurate terminology, the slow yet majestic pace, and the calm tranquillity of the ancient tongue. Then, again, if we revert to the old descriptions of battles. The lanky wolf follows the host out of the forest, and sings his grim even-song, longing for his banquet. The black raven waits for the corpses, and croaks over the battle-field, exulting in the prey. The sword rushes like a serpent on the foe, and the bitter bite of the axe strikes grim death-wounds into men pale with the contest; while the war-stream, and the dark-red battle-drops pour down upon the gleaming steel, dyeing it with the life-fountain. All this betokens a power and a brilliancy of poetic description not easily surpassed.

To this old poetic world an antagonist at length arose in the shape of Christianity. The collection of lays, which his father Charlemagne had so carefully made, Lewis the Pious would not even read, but carelessly permitted them to perish. No doubt songs about Tuisco, the earth-born progenitor of the race, and about the transformation of the father of Sigfried and his sister Signe into wolves, would be distasteful to Christian notions, and would be regarded as an impediment to the spread of Christianity. This objection would apply still more



forcibly to the numerous forms of incantation, where the names of Wuotan, Donar, Ziu, Balder, Sachsnot, and other heathen deities occur. Hence the frequent interdicts launched against all sorts of profane songs by synods and other ecclesiastical authorities; the consequence of which was the almost total destruction and oblivion of every poem which bore a special mythological character, and which would, therefore, have thrown the strongest light on the inner life of that heathen age. Two forms of incantations alone survive, which were unexpectedly discovered at Merseburg in the year 1841.\* All these heroic poems and incantations were in the alliterative form, which, consequently came to be pursued with dislike and suspicion as if it were a heathenish device, until at length it utterly vanished from Northern Germany towards the end of the ninth century, having disappeared in the South, which had been converted to Christianity earlier, at a still remoter period. But while Christianity gave the impulse to the decline of this ancient phase of poetry, yet there was another, and a more powerful, instrument at work. This was the growing tendency of the poets of the age to give expression to their own sentiments as well as to those the people. The spirit of the times had gradually altered. The new development required a new form of verse. The alliterative form was exploded, and perhaps it was best that it should be so, before it had degenerated, as it did in Iceland and Norway, into mere lifeless and mechanical form.

\* Discovered by Waitz, and edited by Grimm. "Ueber zwei entdeckte Gedichte aus der Zeit des deutschen Heidenthums, 4, 1842."



In other poems everything that was derived from the ancient mythus, or served to remind one of it—as for instance, in the earlier history of Sigfrid—was either expunged or grew obsolete. In other cases people were disinclined to part with their dear old heroic lays all at once; so the heathenish parts were modified and altered into the Christian sense. Thus, in the poem of Beovulf, as we now have it, there are a number of Christian additions discernible, which have been evidently interpolated to soften off the parts too glaringly pagan in spirit. So in Walther of Aquitaine,—which, it is true, had passed through the hands of the monks of St. Gall,—Walther, at the beginning of the fight, utters a violent speech of defiance (*gelpf*) in the approved fashion of those days. This remains without alteration; but immediately afterwards the monks make the hero fall down, his arms stretched out in the form of a cross, and beg pardon of God for his impiety. But, in the main, all these heroic ballads were gradually banished from the higher classes upon the advance of Christianity, and were only sung among the lower orders, who still clung with affection to the old-world memories of gods and heroes. In the ninth century they utterly vanish from the history of literature, to reappear 300 years later, old and yet young, forcible yet withal soft and beautiful.

Sacred poetry next came into fashion. Though the subjects were religious, yet at first it still retained not only the alliterative principle, but likewise the old epic forms, together with the forcible and lofty method of description to be found in the old popular compo-

sitions. Such was the so-called "Wessobrunner Gebet," printed in all the old collections, and which begins thus:—"This I found to be the greatest human wisdom; when the earth was not, nor the Heaven above; neither hills nor trees; when the sun shone not, and the moon gave no light; when there was no ocean, no end nor boundary, then was there an Almighty God."

Another Christian poem in the alliterative form describes the end of the world and the last judgment. It is called *muspilli*, a heathen name of rather uncertain meaning, which is the term used in the poem for the end of the world.\* Unfortunately only a fragment of it remains. In sublimity of description it stands only second to Holy writ.

Another poem is an Old-Saxon Harmony of the Gospels, which was written at the instance of Lewis the Pious in the ninth century, and was first printed a thousand years afterwards, under the editorship of Professor Schmeller, by the title of *Heliand* (the Saviour). This poem, which was perhaps the joint composition of several Saxons just after the conversion of that country to Christianity, gives a history of the life of Christ after the combined accounts of the four Evangelists. It is by far the grandest and most perfect specimen of Christian poetry in existence. Nay, apart from its Christian subject, it is one of the noblest productions of poetic

\* *Muspilli*, "Bruchstück einer alt-hochdeutschen alliterierenden Dichtung vom Ende der Welt, von J. P. Schmeller," 1832. For this poem likewise a strophic form is claimed by W. Müller, in *Haupt's Zeitschrift*, 3, 452, *seq.*

genius that ever appeared, and which in many respects is thought by the Germans to match with the Homeric compositions. It is a genuine Christian epos, simple and inartificial as it ought to be, and not disfigured, like Klopstock's "Messiah," by the violent introduction of Christian mythology, or by unsuitable imagery. Simple facts are related in the traditional alliterative form. It is Christ in Germany, Christ among the Saxons, that is here described. The King of kings and Lord of lords approaches with his innumerable train to distribute around the rich gifts of eternal life. As he passes the Castle of Jericho the blind men ask who is the highest and holiest of the passing host? A hero gives answer that Jesus of Galilee is the holiest and the best, and that it was he who was coming near with his people. When the Lord begins the sermon on the mount, the whole scene is described just in those grand forms in which the German kings and princes were wont to meet in council before the eyes of all the people. "Nearer around the mighty Lord, the Prince of Peace, stand the white men, whom God's Son hath chosen for himself. Further below are the hosts of the people. The faithful await the word of their King, thinking in silent reverence what message the Ruler of All is about to bring to the assembled multitudes. And the great Shepherd, God's own child, sits over against the men to teach in wise words the praise of God to the people of the earth. Long did He sit, and silently; and they looked at Him long, and loved Him in their hearts; the Holy Lord, mild in His spirit. Then He

opened His mouth, the omnipotent One, and taught His elect, who of all people were dearest to God. Blessed were they who in this world were poor and lowly, for God would give them eternal life in the land of Heaven, the green paradise of God."

This poem is highly important, as illustrating the history of the introduction of Christianity into Germany; and not the less so, that this composition, so fervid and so true, was the work of Saxons, a people who had been converted to Christianity by the sword, and who were therefore popularly looked upon as in heart still opposed to its doctrines.

Thirty years after the *Heliand* was written, another Harmony of the Gospels was composed by Otfrid, a Benedictine monk of Weissenburg in Alsace. The old epic forms and the old alliteration are here entirely wanting. While in the last-mentioned poem the whole Saxon people with one mighty voice sing the praises of the Eternal, we have here but the voice of an individual monk, who is for ever obtruding himself upon us with his everlasting *I*; and although there is often much that is good, and feeling, and proper in his narration; though at times he even approaches the sublime, yet he frequently becomes tame and feeble and diffuse, where a few powerful touches would have better answered the purpose. As a storehouse of German language the poem is invaluable, and its value is, if possible, enhanced by the uncommon care and accuracy bestowed on the metrical part. In fact, it is from this work of Otfrid's alone that all the scientific rules of German versification must be derived. Alliteration is here succeeded by the

musical principle, rhyme, which has prevailed to the present day.

Unlike the Old-Saxon harmony, this far inferior harmony of Otfrid's, instead of being lost for nine hundred years, appears to have been always more or less known. During the Reformation, it was produced as one of the ancient evidences of Christian truth, and first printed by Matthias Flacius, the theologian of Illyria, at the instance of one Riedesel. A new edition of it by Graff appeared in 1831, under the title of "*Krist*."

Another poem, usually known under the name of the "*Ludwigslied*," deserves mention.\* It is a description, written at the time, of the victory of the Frankish King Ludwig III. over the Normans at the battle of Saucourt, in the year 881. Though lively for the most part in style, and popular in colouring, yet it cannot be compared for a moment with the old epic, which was now no more. It is written in rhyme, which had now got generally into vogue.

The other poetical remains of this period are chiefly of a religious nature; and, together with the contemporary prose literature, are not worthy of notice.† The

\* The so-called "*Ludwigslied*" was discovered by Mabillon, and edited by Schilter, 1696. Subsequently the MS. disappeared, and was not re-discovered till 1837, at Valenciennes, by A. H. Hoffmann; see *Elnonensia*, "*Monuments des Langues romane et tudesque dans le 9<sup>me</sup> Siècle. Publiés par Hoffmann et Willems. Gand. 1837.*" An extract is printed in W. Wackernagel's "*Alt-d. Lesebuch*," second edit. Sp. 105. Unless one may choose to divide it into strophes of two lines, it is properly not a song, but a *Leich*, a term which is explained elsewhere. It was no doubt the work of an ecclesiastic.

† The poetical pieces of this period are,—"*Ein Lied auf den heiligen Petrus*;" "*Ein Leich von Christus und der Samariterin*;" "*Ein Leich*

latter consist of laborious translations, or commentaries on parts of the Bible, by the learned inmates of St. Gall and other monasteries; or they are codes of ecclesiastical rules, or theological treatises. Besides these there are some extracts from Aristotle, from Boethius, and Marcianus Capella. As sources of German language they are many of them most important, but much less so as illustrating the history of German literature.

On the extinction of poetry, prose, as usual, succeeded to an equally exclusive dominion. This remark will apply to Germany from the end of the ninth to the middle of the twelfth century.

In conclusion, we may here notice a literary curiosity. As is well known, there are still extant several Christian formulæ of faith, prayers, and renunciations of the Devil, dating from the eighth and ninth centuries, and among others, those wherein the Saxon converts renounced Wuotan, Donar, and Sachsnot. In the number of these there used formerly to figure a Saxon prayer, or vow, addressed to Wodan, which began "Hilli krote Wodane," and then followed a Saxon form of submission to Charlemagne. These pieces were Saxon, it is true, but belonged to the eighteenth century, and not to the eighth. The author was a municipal scribe of Goslar.

From the tenth century a sleep came over German poetry, and continued down to the middle of the twelfth.

von h. Georg." (see a subsequent note); "Ein (half-Latin) Leich von Ottos des Grossen Versöhnung mit seinem Bruder Heinrich;" "Ein Gebot;" and some fragments of partly alliterative songs of war, hunting, or mythology, which last are preserved in a work on rhetoric by the monks of St. Gall. The prose literature of this period is cited by Koberstein *Grundrise*, 4th edition, pp. 94-100.



The nation was engaged in assimilating the great principles of Christianity; in working them into its very life and blood. Not that the old heroic lays of Sigfrid and Dietrich, of Kriemhild and Hagen, of Walther and Etzel, were forgotten. Songs, too, were written on the Battle of Eresburg in 912; on Adelbert of Babenberg; Kuonrad the Short; on the hunting of the ure-ox by the Bavarian Duke Erbo; and the Hungarian wars of the Emperor Henry III. But these were mere dreams, which vanished when the nation awoke. The language was inaccurate, the verse careless and uncouth, and the descriptions meagre. It is not pretended that the above is a thorough explanation of the causes of the extinction of German poetry during two centuries and a half; the facts merely are stated and the possible reasons indicated.

Politically, Germany was by no means dormant in that period; and it is not impossible that this very political activity and greatness, *e. g.* in the time of Henry the Saxon and Henry III., may have been among the reasons which threw the people's poetical powers into abeyance.

Again, the ecclesiastical grandeur, such as prevailed in the reign of Henry the Pious, though favourable to learning, and to Latin as the language of church literature, was not favourable to the development of national poetry. It is true that Hruodswintha, or Roswitha, as she is called, the nun of Gandersheim, wrote Latin comedies in imitation of Terence; and histories in the Latin tongue were written by Witekind of Corvei, Dietmar of Merseburg, and Lambert of Aschaffenburg.



But this was nothing but politics and learning playing into each other's hands to prevent the poetic genius of the people from awaking.

Poetry *did* awake when the spark from the East set all the West in one mighty flame of enthusiasm ; when the seed planted in Germany in the eighth and ninth centuries, and which had been growing in secret for nearly three centuries, burst forth at once into full flower. This, of course, refers to the time of the Crusades, which was, in fact, the manifestation of the old western heroic character, blended with, and sanctified by, the spirit of Christianity. It was then that the genius of the old heroic song was suddenly aroused. Then came the time of the Minnesingers, the first classical period of German literature.

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## THE OLD PERIOD.

BEFORE, however, the Middle-High-German poetry reached its culminating point, a short preparatory period intervened, beginning about 1150 A.D., and closing with the appearance of Heinrich von Veldekin, who flourished between 1184 and 1188. The chief difference between the poets of this short intervening period and those who immediately succeeded lies in their language and versification. They lived on the Middle and Lower Rhine, and wrote in the dialect which prevails in those parts—at least on the Lower Rhine—even to the present day. This dialect is a mixture of High and Low German elements, in which the original vowel sounds are confused, and, even in the consonantal system, the Middle-High-German forms are often mixed up with the Middle-Low-German forms: on which account Jacob Grimm has now defined it as the Middle-Low-German as opposed to the Middle-High-German, with which he formerly classed it. Of course this must not be confounded with the Middle Netherlandish, the mother of the present New Netherlandish, or Dutch. As may be well imagined, this dialect was deficient in that general perfection, that accuracy, and harmonious purity of rhyme, which so distinguished the dialect that afterwards attained universal sway, the Middle-High-German.

Neither do we find in it that accurate measure of the lines which was first introduced by Veldekin, the father

of the Middle-High-German poetry: though he did not bring it to perfection. It wanted, moreover, the right number of rises (arsis), as well as their accurate proportion to the falls (thesis); a rule which Otfrid had, with a true genius for language, observed three hundred years before.

To restore harmony of sounds, and purity of rhymes, and to adapt the tone and flow of the verse to the subject matter, was a task reserved for the succeeding writers, who did not so much imitate Otfrid herein as follow their own pure poetical instincts. This improvement in the language, and more especially in the versification, was called "rîme rihten" (to arrange the rhyme); a very ancient expression which the Middle-High-German poets used of their own compositions in contradistinction to those of an earlier date. In the preparatory period above mentioned the so-called short pairs of rhymes is the form which universally prevails.

The subject-matter of the poems written in this preparatory period (1150—1190) is almost entirely the same as that of the poetry of the succeeding period. Thus, we have the poem of "King Rother," an heroic saga. As a specimen of the animal saga, we have the oldest known version of "Reynard the Fox." The beautiful fragment of "Count Rudolf" is a romance of chivalry. The foreign saga is represented by the priest Conrad's "Song of Roland," and by Eilhartson Oberg's version of "Tristan;" the classical saga by the priest Lamprecht's "Leben Alexander's des Grossen" (Life of Alexander the Great); while among historical Epopœas are the "Lied von heiligen Anno"

(the Life of St. Anno, Archbishop of Cologne), and the "Kaiser Chronik." Besides these there are a number of legends and the beginnings of Minne poetry in Dietmar von Aist, and others.

We pass now to the period between 1190 and 1300, when Old-German poetry reached its zenith.

The home of this earliest German classic poetry was South Germany; including, first and principally, Suabia, the land of the Hohenstaufen; then the Upper Rhine, Switzerland, Bavaria, Austria, and Franconia. Hence the epithet "Suabian" applied by Bodmer and others to this period and to the dialect in which this poetry was written. Jacob Grimm, on the other hand, called this dialect the "Middle-High-German," which term is the one now exclusively used.

This language, which was regularly and systematically organized, first out of the Gothic and then out of the Old-High-German, falls short of its predecessors in fullness of grammatical terminations and in gravity of expression; but it is vastly superior to the present German language, which arose out of it under Low-German influences, in the wealth of its terminology, in delicacy of expression, in precision of sound, and in the purity and harmony of the rhymes.

If for a moment we endeavour to recall the state of the then world—the world as it was from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth century, in respect to politics, belief, customs, social life, art and science—the great influence that the Christian church exercised on the growth of German poetry at once becomes apparent. The spirit of Christianity had, in

the nations of the West, and especially in Germany, become the spirit of the people. Most strongly developed in the nobility and clergy, it penetrated also into the masses, not as a doctrine but as a fact, not as an abstract science but as an element of existence. Christianity with the Germans was not a notion and conception, but a possession and enjoyment. The spiritual satisfaction arising from the inward and outward grandeur of the Christian church was so general and so strong, that not even the struggles between the Emperors and the Popes, which lasted for more than two hundred years, could interfere with it.

The *old* poets, and, still more, the poets of the period now under consideration, describe *doubt* as a most sad state, and utterly destructive of the soul. Even in the days of heathenism the German had this touch of strength and truth and tenacity in his character. He was in unity with himself, settled and clear in his views. What he was, he was out and out, life and soul. Christianity, which will have us altogether, life, soul, and spirit, was the very thing to suit such a character as this. Christianity offered that sense of comfort, calm, and security which the people felt the want of, and enabled them to give true vent to their deepest aspirations.

While the national mind was in this state the Crusades supervened; by which thoughts rose into deeds, and Christian heroism was proved in glorious actions. Call the Crusades a fantastic undertaking if you will—a sentence nevertheless which would hardly be justified before the tribunal of history, certainly not before the higher tribunal of Christian civilization,

—still this very fantasticalness gave no mean impulse to the highest poetic capacities of the age. For five hundred years the nation had lived within itself, at most defending its domestic hearths against the invasion of Hungarian hordes. From generation to generation the people had been confined within the narrow precincts of their towns and quiet villages. Contented with their simple castles, or lonely cottages, on the edge of the forest or on the green heath, they knew nothing, and cared nothing, about what lay beyond. But now, all on a sudden, a new world appeared, and the unknown magnificence of the East, rendered more gorgeous by the magic colours of distance, was opened to their view. Gay cavalcades of French crusaders, mounted on richly caparisoned steeds, and clad in glittering mail, swept along the re-opened highways of Germany, lusting for conquest, hoping for victory, chaunting martial songs, as they passed before the wondering eyes of the population. No marvel, then, they fell into an indescribable tumult of conflicting feelings. Sweet love of home and irresistible desire to roam; bitter regret at parting and joyous wish for travel; such were the emotions that rent the youth of Germany, and which all the poems of that day do not fail to dwell upon, as, for instance, the immortal “*Parcival*” of Wolfram von Eschenbach.

Add to all this, the political greatness of the German Empire. The Emperor was the temporal head of Christendom; the nobility and their relatives the flower of European chivalry; and the people, under their Emperor, ruled the world. Let us consider also



the personal qualities of those who then filled the Imperial throne, the race of Hohenstaufen; so genial and joyous, so enthusiastic and abounding in great ideas. Taken as a whole, no period could have been more fertile than this in all the highest and most ennobling incentives to poetry. The mighty Barbarossa himself was a poetical figure of the first order, from the day when he so firmly grasped the sceptre, till that on which he sank in the waters of the Selef. The memory of the Emperor with the flame-red beard has never been forgotten in Germany, and the notion still prevails among the people that when he wakes from his slumber in the depths of the Kiffhäuserberg, the nation will awake to its former greatness. Nor must it be forgotten that in those days Germany was in a state of inward as well as of outward unity. All were penetrated with the same national pride on account of the nation's greatness; and all had the same poetical sympathies. The memory of the legendary heroes of the olden time belonged to all. All had the same tongue. It was not split up as it is now into clumsy dialects on the one hand, and into the superfine language of conversation on the other. Lastly, the manners and customs of all were alike, and faithful to the traditions of their forefathers. No more congenial state of things could be imagined for the fostering of the poetic element. No sooner was the music struck than everyone caught up the lay; it resounded from castle to castle, from town to town, and a thousand voices from far and near joined in the chorus.



The poetry of those times may be divided into two sorts, popular or natural poetry, and art poetry. The former describes the national experiences of all the people. Here fact follows fact in rapid succession; there is no stopping to think and dwell on the past. All is clear without the aid of foreign figures. Artificial turns and tricks of composition are out of place; there is no straining after effect. The people's joys and woes are sounded by themselves, now in loud and jubilant strains, now in deep and pathetic tones. Like nature herself, natural poetry is ever fresh and young. To use the words of one who, after Herder, was the first to discover the true essence of poetry generally, and of German poetry in particular,—Jacob Grimm—“natural poetry is a living book, full of genuine history, which a man can understand wherever he opens it; but which he can never read to the end or understand throughout.”\*

Art-poetry, on the contrary, is the result of reflection and thought, the work of the individual poet. It is not life itself, but life mirrored through his mind. It is the experience, not of a whole people, but of one, who has often got the start of his contemporaries. Nay, it is frequently no real experience of the poet at all, but simply something that he has guessed at by the force of poetic divination. Hence his own individuality, be it great or small, mean or noble, is continually pressed into the foreground; and, in order that he may be more pleasing to his readers, he has recourse to figures and

\* J. Grimm über den altdutschen Meistergesang, 1811, p. 6.

comparisons. In the development of a nation's poetic capacities both of these kinds of poetry are requisite. Without a national poetry a nation would not be a nation at all; without art-poetry it could only be a nation whose legitimate development had been violently obstructed.

The first of these two kinds of poetry—national poetry—was represented in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by strolling minstrels, who went with their budget of sagas and songs from castle to castle, from land to land; and, whether at popular assemblies or festivals, in hall or in market-place, sang their loud and artless strains about the grandeur of the old petty kings and their faithful retainers; and thus was awakened and fostered that old love of song and minstrelsy that was characteristic of the people. These itinerants and their hearers knew nought of books, or of ditties long hidden and now again brought to light. All was living oral tradition.

“ Uns ist in alten Mären Wunders viel geseit\*  
 Von helden lobebæren, Von grozer chuoneit:  
 Von vrouden und hoch-geziten, Von weinen und von chlagen,  
 Von chuner rechenstriten, Muget ir nu wunder hören sagen.”

These words, which commence the “Nibelungslied,” are the key-note of all German national poetry. In regard to form, the popular poetry is arranged in strophes adapted for singing. These are of two kinds: the so-called Nibelung strophe, consisting of four long

\* We find in ancient story wonders many told,  
 Of heroes in great glory, with spirit free and bold:  
 Of joyousness and high tides, of weeping and of woe,  
 Of noble heroes striving, mote ye new wonders know.

lines of six feet each (except the last, which has seven), and each ending with a single rhyme\* ; and the Berner Ton, so called because several of the independent sagas of "Dietrich" of Bern are written in it, and which consists of one strophe of thirteen lines.

Art-poetry was mainly the production of emperors and kings, nobles and knights. Thus we have poems by Henry VI., the son of Barbarossa, and by King Conradin, who was beheaded at Naples by the axe of the executioner; also by Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia; by Heinrich, Duke of Breslau; by Otto, Margrave of Brandenburg; and by the immortal poets, Hartmann von der Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Walther von der Vogelweide, and Ulrich von Lichtenstein, who were all of noble lineage. They sang for the most part to the brilliant assemblages of courtly knights, august dames, and lovely damsels that filled the courts of princes. Newly invented romances, ornate in language and artistic in description, songs of the heart's joys and sorrows, such were their constant theme; and while popular poetry was conspicuous for its adherence to traditional forms and subjects, these art-poets were for ever aiming at something novel and foreign. It was their endeavour to invest their poetry with all the fanciful and rich colouring that was shed around the world of chivalry in those days, when the magnificence of France and Spain, and the fascinating splendours of the East,

\* The rhymes at the end of the third and fourth lines of the poem may appear to be double. But they are not so in reality; the words "chlagen" and "sagen" were pronounced as monosyllables. Many other apparent infractions of the rule in the text are to be explained in the same way.—*Editor*.

had been just revealed by means of the Crusades to the admiring knighthood of Germany. On this account this art-poetry has been also called knightly or court-poetry.

Its form was—for artistic narrative—the short pairs of rhymes, *i.e.*, pairs of lines of four feet, each pair ending in single rhymes, or of three feet, if ending in double rhymes; for lyrics, the tripartite strophe.

But to return to folk or national poetry, as represented in epic. It is to be observed that in the chief Old-German Epics there is no principal hero, properly so called. The cause of this is probably to be sought in the manner in which these epics originated. They most probably took their rise from a number of detached poems in honour of different heroes. These in process of time would flow together into one great deep and majestic stream. Of such mighty streams of poetry Germany possesses two. The one pouring headlong, impetuous, foaming and bellowing through the rocks—the “Nibelungen Not;” the other gliding clear and smooth, yet strong and deep, through smiling, verdant fields—the poem of “Gudrun.”

We may here mention one remarkable feature which these two German Epics possess in common with the *Iliad*. The chief characters in each are placed in subjection, so to say, to another; this quality of obedience being in fact a chief ingredient in the true heroic character. Achilles is not the leader of the Greeks, but Agamemnon. Hector is only the first of those who serve Priam the Trojan King. Dietrich is the ally of Etzel; while Rudiger serves Etzel, and Hagen and Volker serve Gunther the Burgundian King. Even

Sigfrid, who originally belongs to the Götter-saga, is made, in the "Nibelungen Lied"—albeit for a short period—to serve another.

The second rank among the Old-German Epics is occupied by poems descriptive of a single hero, after the manner of Homer's "Odyssey," or of some one exploit of an individual hero. These poems, which were preserved fresh from age to age in the pure oral tradition of the people, possess a high degree of poetical interest, and one scarcely inferior to that of the great Epopeas. Such are the "Hildebrand's Lied," which belongs to the oldest Period. Such also "Walther of Wasichenstein;" "Ecken Ausfahrt;" "Sigenot;" "Dietrich's Flucht zu den Hunnen;" "Alphart's Tod;" "Rabenschlacht;" as well as the saga of Herzog Ernst, and others. All these independent sagas were known at the time when the great Epics first originated, and are often expressly alluded to therein. Indeed, they are frequently of essential service towards our due comprehension of the latter. They form, as it were, a poetic back-ground, of unfathomable depth, so that when we have read them we fancy there must still be something more behind; beyond the lowest depth, one deeper still, concealing an inexhaustible supply of poetic sagas. Thus every page in the "Nibelungenlied," to the diligent student, points, like the Homeric Epics, to some far-off epic distance, which heightens the charm of the perusal.

In the third rank may be placed those poems which further develop, and are supplementary to, the genuine old heroic songs. These, although not deficient in

freshness and power, are, as may readily be imagined, neither so simple nor so natural as the old heroic songs, and they want their quiet grandeur and confidence. First of these stands the song of "Rosengarten zu Worms;" likewise some poems in amplification of the saga of "Dietrich of Bern." Thus we see that the old epic saga came to be developed artistically. The poet, instead of being borne along on the joyous stream, stands as it were on the margin of the flood, reflecting as he beholds it passing by. Thus the poet's sorrow for the heroes who have fallen in the "Nibelungen Not" breaks forth into words in the poem called the "Klage" (lament). Similar to this, though more of a narrative character, is the poem of "Biterolf und Dietlieb." Lastly come imitations, where the transition from popular poetry into art poetry becomes complete. The subject-matter, which no longer is confined to living popular tradition, is set forth, and adorned with all the art that each individual poet has at command. Nature is merged into art; and the poetic impulse of the whole people subsides into the invention and reflection of an individual. Several such imitations are to be found in the later Greek poetry. But the best known production of the kind is the "Æneid" of Virgil. Kunst-Epos (art-epic) is the name given to this kind of poetry in Germany.

Before proceeding to examine the several creations of the German epic, we will here take a rapid glance at its chief characteristic. This may be summed up in the word fidelity; mutual fidelity between the prince and his people. He is generous, and never tired of



giving so long as he has anything to give; they are grateful, and their gratitude only ends with their life. They are ready to fight, and bleed, and die, and give up all they hold most dear, for their beloved lord. And he, on the other hand, will not suffer anything to separate him from his faithful retainers, short of the downfall of himself and his race. Hagen smites Sigfrid dead out of fidelity to his queen, Brunhild. Hagen is against the expedition into the land of the Huns; but since the Kings, his masters, have resolved upon it, he sets out firm and undaunted as the "helflicher Trost" (help and comfort) of the Nibelungs, although he knows beforehand that this expedition will be the death of himself and his masters, and the destruction of the Burgundian race; and he struggles by the side of his loved lords until the end. When, on the other hand, the enemy promise the Burgundian Kings free passage on condition of their delivering up Hagen, a cry of horror bursts from their hearts. "Perish rather fatherland, and wife, and blooming bride, and young existence; perish rather the noble race of the Burgundians, of which we are the last;" and so Hagen is not delivered up. Again, Rudiger, the squire of Kriemhild and Etzel, fights the fierce fight of death with Gernot, the Burgundian, his best friend; for Gernot, although the brother, is yet the foe of his mistress. Neither survives the other; they fall together, but Rudiger is faithful to the end. So again, in the poem of "Wolfdieterich," Berchtung, the old tutor in arms and attendant of Wolfdieterich, who, with his sixteen sons, has gone to battle for his master,

looks round with a smile towards his lord, as five of them fall one after another, that his lord may not mark that one of his beloved retainers has fallen. The remaining eleven are taken prisoners, and now Woldietrich, who is sad for the loss of his faithful ones, wanders many years through all the world, alone and poor, undergoing countless dangers and struggles in search of them. Kingdoms, the hand of an Empress, fresh retainers by the thousand, are offered him; but he will have none of them, if he cannot have his old servants back again. Rather will he wander on, poor and lonely, till he has discharged his debt of fidelity to his men, and liberated them from imprisonment.

Such is the pulse that beats through the German Epos. And unless we keep this in view, we shall fail to comprehend its meaning. In short, the greatness of the heroes so intimately depends upon the quality of faithfulness, that it may be said to be the poetical mainspring of the whole. We fail to discover this feature in the Greek Epos; or if there at all, it is only in a subordinate degree, and in very faint outline. And hence it is, that while the Greek Epos possesses a more general interest, the German Epos possesses a deeper one.

We now pass on to the several productions of national heroic poetry, distinguishing between the Sagas, on which they are based, according to the several national races.

The first group of Sagas is the Lower Rhenish or Frankish; the hero is Sigfrid, whose abode is Santen, on the Lower Rhine.

The second set of Sagas is the Burgundian. The heroes are Gunther, Gernot, and Giselher, with their mother Ute, their sister Kriemhild, and Gunther's wife, Brunhild. Then come their followers, chief among whom are Hagen and Volker. Their residence is Worms.

The third is the East-Gothic. The hero is Dietrich, who from his residence, Verona (Germanicè Bern), bears the name of Dietrich von Bern. His chiefest attendant and weapon-master is old Hildebrand, of the race of the Wolfings; next to him, Wolfhart, Wolfbrandt, Wolfwin, all Wolfings; together with Sigestab, Helferich, and four others.

The fourth Saga-group is devoted to Attila or Etzel, King of the Huns, his first wife Helche and their sons; his retainer Rüdiger von Bechlarn, and his allies, Hawart, Duke of Lorraine, with his vassal Iring, and Irnfrid, Prince of Thuringia. Etzel's abode is at Etzelburg in Hungary, *hodiè* Ofen.

These four series of Sagas are combined in the poem of the *Nibelungen Not*, and in its artistic sequel the *Klage*. The first batch of Sagas, that of Sigfrid, has also a special poem on the exploits of Sigfrid before he comes into connexion with the Burgundians, viz., the lay of Sigfrid's fight with the Dragon, or of "hürnin Sigfrid." In like manner there are a whole set of songs about Dietrich of Bern, in which he is described as quite disconnected with the other Saga-series, *e. g.*, Ecken Ausfart, König Laurin, Riesen Sigenot; or where he is in connexion with Etzel only, and not with the Nibelungs, *e. g.*, the song of "Dietrich's

Flight to the Huns;" "Alphart's Tod;" and the "Ravenna," or "Rabenschlacht," besides some others. The poem of "Rosengarten" is a later attempt to connect Dietrich with Sigfrid and the Burgundians.

The Burgundian Saga-series also possesses a poem, which was reproduced separately in this period, on the deeds of Walter of Aquitaine.

The fifth is the North-German, the Frisian-Danish-Norman, series of Sagas, which depicts the maritime life of the Northern German. The scene is laid in Friesland among the islands on the North-Sea. The heroes are Hettel, King of the Hegelings (Frisians), Horant, King of the Stormans, his attendant and uncle Wate, and Hettel's daughter Gudrun. The song of *Gudrun*, in which these sagas are embodied, is, after the *Nibelungen Not*, the finest specimen of the German Epic Muse.

The sixth and last series is the Lombardic. The heroes are King Rother, King Otnit, Hugdietrich, and his son Wolfdietrich. Their home is Garten (Lago di Garda) in Lombardy; the scene is laid partly in Lombardy, partly in Southern Tyrol, and partly in the East. There are three poems belonging to this series; the tale of King Rother—which belongs to the antecedent period,—the poem of King Otnit, and the still more elaborate one of Hugdietrich and Wolfdietrich. According to the legend, Otnit, Hugdietrich, and Wolfdietrich are much older than Dietrich of Bern; and it is not improbable that these Lombard Sagas are based originally on traditions, which go farther back than the times of the latter. But, in their present shape, they

bear unmistakeable signs of belonging to the time of the Crusades, and are consequently the most modern of all the Sagas. Passing over the history of these Sagas\*, we shall proceed to give an epitome of the *Nibelungenlied*.

In Burgundian land, at the old Royal Castle of Worms on the Rhine, a noble king's daughter, whose father had died young, grew up to blooming womanhood, charming and lovely to behold. Dreams, prophetic of the future, hover lightly over the head of the sweet Kriemhild in the midst of the still seclusion, in which, agreeably to the custom of the age, her childhood and commencing youth are spent. She dreams that she has a falcon, which she nurtures for many a day, until two eagles suddenly swoop down and crush her gentle favorite in their cruel talons. Sad at heart, when she awakes, she recounts her dream to her mother, who thus interprets her daughter's sweet, but fearful, forebodings.

"The falcon is a noble knight, for whom thy future is destined; may God preserve him, lest thou lose him too early." "What sayst thou of knights, dear mother?" replies the daughter; "I had liefer far be without knight's love, and preserve my virgin beauty until death; lest my wooing some day end in woe." "Not

\* "Die deutsche Heldensage von Wilhelm Grimm, Göttingen," 1829. The only comprehensive description from original sources of the entire range of German Sagas. With regard to Grässe's work, "Die grossen Sagenkreise des Mittelalters," 1842, we must warn our readers in the same way as it has been already done by Koberstein in his "Grundriss," 4th edit. p. 175 a.

so hasty, my child" rejoins the mother; "wilt thou ever be glad of heart, thou wilt be so from knightly wooing. Thou shalt be a noble hero's beauteous wife."

Thus the first presentiment of the unspeakable woe that was to follow, comes from the depths of the virgin's heart like a distant echo, and the shade of the dream rises higher and higher athwart the clear heaven of her life and love. It sweeps ever darker and darker over the first spring days of her affection; ever darker and darker over the brilliant marriage feast. The sun's rays pale and grow faint through the gloom, till at last it sinks with a blood-red glare into eternal night.

Meanwhile, rejoicing in his youth and strength, the bold Sigfrid, son of Sigmund and Sigelinde, lives at Santen, on the Lower Rhine. Renowned, even in boyhood, for giant strength, he had, as he grew up, travelled from land to land, and given proofs of mighty prowess. At last a report reaches him of the beautiful maiden at Worms on the Upper Rhine, and straightway the handsomest, the most engaging, and the noblest hero of the day, starts off with his men of war for Worms to court the fairest, the sweetest, and most modest damsel that any land could boast of. Here, too, a murmur of warning presentiment escapes from the lips of his wise father, King Sigmund; a tear for her dear son, whom she fears to lose, falls from the eye of Sigelinda upon his strong hand. Still he proceeds on his journey, loaded with rich presents by his parents. The strangers halt their richly caparisoned steeds before the Royal Castle of Worms: very giants in youthful strength, and clad in mail of matchless splendour. But



nobody recognises the knights that have halted before the castle, or the youth of kingly stature at their head.

So Hagen von Tronei is sent for, who knows all foreign lands, but even he is unacquainted with these heroes. Still, he says, they must be princes or princely envoys; whencesoever they come they are high-spirited warriors, no doubt. And soon after he adds, "I have never seen Prince Sigfrid, but, by my troth, I fain must think that it can be only he that stands yonder with so lordly a mien. Yes, it is Sigfrid, who won from the dark race of Schilbung and Nibelung the vast treasure of red gold and precious stones; who seized upon their lands, and took in hot fight from the dwarf Alberich, his cape, which renders the wearer invisible. This is the same Sigfrid, who slew a dragon and bathed himself in its blood, so that his skin is as invulnerable as horn. Such terrible heroes as these must have a friendly reception."

Sigfrid is entertained in a manner befitting his rank. Contests of knightly prowess take place in the courtyard of the palace. Kriemhild steals a furtive glance through the window, and, at the sight of the youthful hero, forgets all the amusements, all the occupations of her secluded maidenhood. But a whole year is spent by Sigfrid at the court of the Burgundian king before he can obtain a sight of her whom he has come to woo. He enters the king's service and starts for the wars, where he distinguishes himself in many a deed of daring. He goes down the Rhine with the Burgundian host, and marches through Hessa into the distant land of the Saxons, whose king, Liutger, together with King

Liutgart of Denmark, had declared war against Burgundy. In the murderous strife Sigfrid bears off the palm. He takes Liutgart prisoner, and Liutger with his Saxons surrender. Messengers arrive at Worms with the joyful news, and one of them is introduced into the presence of Kriemhild, whose heart, it is rightly supposed, is not at Worms, but with the heroes fighting in Saxony. "Now, tell me thy news," says Kriemhild, "and tell me true, and then I will give thee all my gold, and be kind to thee ever after." "No one, my noble lady," says the messenger, "was more famous in the fray than the stranger from the Netherlands. Sigfrid's hand it was that won the day. It was he who took, and he who has sent the Saxon hostages that you will see come up the Rhine." Hereupon she orders ten marks of gold and rich garments to be given to the messenger for his tidings, which were dear to all, but to none dearer than to the royal maid whose bosom burns with a hidden flame. After this, she sits silent at the narrow window of the palace, looking down the road which must be traversed by the victors. At last they appear on the distant plain by the Rhine, and throng about the castle flushed with victory and joy; her lover among the number, the hero of heroes, the observed of all observers. Still he cannot see her; for, with maiden coyness, she keeps her secluded chamber. At last a great tournament is fixed for the merry Whitsuntide, and from far and near flock the highest and the best, among them two and thirty princes, to the court of the Burgundian kings; and then, at length, may Kriemhild appear for the first time in public, by the

side of her mother Ute, attended by a hundred chamberlains and a hundred noble matrons and damsels. She rises like the dawn from out of the dim clouds, and she shines in the mild beauty of youth and silent love like the moon and the stars through the mists of night. Sigfrid stands aloof. "How could I ever think to woo thee. That were a foolish fancy. But must I leave thee; I would sooner die." Hereupon Gunther, in courtly fashion, on a hint from Gernot, bids Sigfrid approach and greet their sister. The hero advances, and bows like a lover before the maiden; the force of longing desire draws them together, and they look at each other with sidelong glances of love. Still they speak not till after the religious service, which began the festival, is over, when the maiden thanks the knight for the valorous aid he had given her brothers. "It was all done in thy service, Kriemhild," is the answer of Sigfrid; and "now that he has found his tongue," he stays for the twelve days of the festival in the neighbourhood of the loved maiden. The stranger guests now depart, and Sigfrid also prepares to set out for home; "for he did not trust himself to woo the object of his affections." Nevertheless, he easily allows himself to be persuaded by Giseler to tarry a while longer in the spot where he was dearer than all, and where he daily saw the fair Kriemhild.

Now there was a Queen who lived beyond the sea; beautiful she was exceedingly, and possessed withal of superhuman strength. Whoever came to woo her must first contend with her in hurling the lance, and throwing the stone, and springing after the stone when

thrown, and she promised to be the bride of the man who could conquer in all three trials; if beaten they were to lose their heads. Many a champion had come to seek the hand of the warrior-virgin Brunhild, but none had ever returned. King Gunther of Burgundy determines to risk his life for her love, and calls on Sigfrid to help him in his wooing. Sigfrid assents, on condition that Gunther gives him his sister to wife, which Gunther promises to do, so soon as Brunhild shall have come to Burgundy. The compact is sealed with an oath, and the ship is equipped for the voyage. Golden shields and rich apparel are carried down to the shore, and many a tearful eye follows the heroes, as with swelling sails they set off on their voyage. Sigfrid, the skilful seaman, grasps the helm, and Gunther takes the oar. After a voyage of twelve days they arrive at Isenstein, where Brunhild resides. On the sea shore they see three vast palaces and a spacious hall, surrounded by six-and-eighty towers of strange and awful architecture, and all built of green marble. Sigfrid alone is acquainted with this wondrous castle and its lofty mistress. She, too, knows the hero that approaches, alas! too well. "Welcome," she says, without first asking the name of the strangers, "welcome, Sir Sigfrid to my land; and wherefore have you come?" "There stands Gunther," he replies, "King upon the Rhine. To win thy love hath he come. He is my lord, and I his vassal. In thy behoof are we here." The contest now begins: Sigfrid supplying the place of Gunther, who has no chance with the maiden, such is her supernatural strength. The magic cape

makes Sigfrid invisible. Brunhild's terrible *ger* (spear), with its heavy shaft and broad three-edged iron, is now brought forth; and then a ponderous round stone, so heavy that it requires the force of twelve heroes to drag it into the ring. She turns back the sleeves from her white arms, grasps the shield and spear, and commences the fight. Gunther, who cannot see Sigfrid, trembles at the sight of his antagonist, although the struggle was of his own seeking. Sigfrid takes Gunther's shield and bids him only imitate his gestures. The Valkyr hurls the spear, and the sparkles flash from the shield of her opponent, like flames waving in the wind. Sigfrid reels for a moment under the force of the blow, but recovers himself directly, and then hurls the spear against the maiden with still greater force; she wards it off with her shield, but falls. "Thanks for the shot," she cries, springing to her feet, "thanks, noble Gunther." Enraged at her discomfiture, she now seizes the stone, hurls it afar, and then at a bound springs beyond it, making her armour clatter again. But the bold Sigfrid, lithe and agile of limb, seizes at once the mighty stone, casts it still further than the maiden, and in the same instant that he throws it, makes an enormous bound, far outstripping her's, although he bore the king along with him under his arm. The Valkyr turns to her attendants with the exclamation, "Come hither, my mates and men, King Gunther shall be your lord." Preparations are now made for departure. Sigfrid, after first paying a visit to his kingdom of the Nibelungs, and taking from thence much treasure and many men, proceeds in advance to Worms to announce the



victory, and the approach of the new queen. The object had been gained. Brunhild is betrothed to Gunther, while Kriemhild and Sigfrid, in the presence of the whole court, exchange the kiss of betrothal. But meanwhile, tears fall down the cheeks of the beautiful Brunhild. Sad and conscience-stricken, Gunther demands the cause of her grief. She answers, "I weep for thy sister Kriemhild, because thou hast wedded her not to a king, but to one of thy vassals." "Peace, my fair queen," replies Gunther, "I will tell thee another time why I have given my sister to Sigfrid; he will make her a good spouse."

This is the first fold of the unlucky knot, the secret windings of which are hereafter to be revealed. As we have seen above, Brunhild and Sigfrid were not strangers to each other, the cause which she assigns for her grief is evidently a feigned one; for she must know that Sigfrid is as much a king as Gunther. It is equally plain that Gunther gives her an evasive answer, for fear of betraying himself. It must have been all along apparent to the reader that Brunhild had some previous claim to Sigfrid's affection. Her love, long suppressed, now bursts forth into the flames of jealousy. And here we get a glimpse of the deities of the old pagan world. A writing appears on the wall, full of threatening augury, which makes the hearts of the beholders shudder. Brunhild,—as we know from the Scandinavian sagas, in which this legend, originally a German one, is preserved in its pagan form,—was a Valkyr of the great German God, Wuotan (Odin), who had sent her to sleep with a prick of the magic thorn, and shut her up,



for a punishment, within a circling wall of flaming fire. Upon this, Sigfrid, the victorious god of the sun and of spring, the god of nature with the bright shining eyes, breaks through the flaming wall, and delivers the captive. They are then wedded, the sun-born god with the earth-born maiden. But short is their nuptial joy. Sigfrid departs, departs for ever from his young bride; just like the year, ever moving onward in his remorseless career, parts from his first love, the verdant spring, for his second love, the glowing summer.

This legend still lives on in the mouth of the Germans, but in an altered shape. Instead of the awful Valkyr, surrounded by a flaming wall, we have in the fairy tale, Dornröschen, an enchanted maiden of wondrous beauty, who has been pricked by a spindle, and sleeps behind a wall of thorns until released by her deliverer.\*

\* For a criticism of the mythology of the "Nibelungenlied," see W. Grimm's "Deutsche Heldensage;" Lachmann, "Kritik der Sage von den Nibelungen" (first in Rhein. Museum, 1829, pp. 435-464; and then in "Anmerkungen zu den Nibelungen und zur Klage," 1836, pp. 333-349), W. Müller, "Versuch einer mythologischen Erklärung der Nibelungensage," 1841. All the other attempts at a mythological or historical exposition of the "Nibelungensage" are failures; *e. g.*, Crüger's "Der Ursprung des Nibelungenlieds," 1841. From this condemnation we must except Peter Erasmus Müller's excellent "Sagabibliothek," which, however, treats more of the northern shape of the Saga. To the observations in the text on the origination of the "Nibelungenlied" from separate songs, we may add that W. Müller, in his "Ueber die Lieder von der Nibelungen," broaches quite a novel idea, *viz.*, that the first part of the poem, with the exception of a few later additions, originates from two authors. This idea, which is based on good grounds, is a medium between Lachmann's notion and the old hypothesis, which ascribed the whole work to one writer only. In 1853 Adolf Holtzman started a conjecture which was meant to upset the whole of Lachmann's theory about the origin of the Nibelungenlied. This he endeavoured to do by showing that the Recension

In the "Nibelungenlied," at least in its present shape, the above mythic background is either presupposed, or purposely omitted. But if we lift up the curtain, what a wondrous vista may be seen in the far distance. The more than human Valkyrs, Sigfrid the magnificent God of Light and Power; Wuotan, the Lord of the World and Giver of Victory; and beyond these, Donar and Ziu, Fro and Frowa, and all the figures, whether dreadful or benign, of the old pagan mythology of Germany; and further still, the terrible powers of Nature herself, the phantoms of a wild primæval people.

But to return to the course of our story. It is true that only at intervals we obtain a glimpse of the demons lowering in the background; but there is no lack of demons of another sort. Jealousy, envy, hatred, bloody revenge, are all there. But these are blended with the noblest aspirations of the human breast, with love, and fidelity, and gratitude; just in fact as these are blended indissolubly in the heart of man, so that one and the same pulsation produces love and hate, envy and gratitude. This transformation of the Saga from the harsher mythic character into a milder and softer form, is solely attributable to the

of the poem, which was declared by Lachmann to be the oldest, was only a clumsy abbreviation of the detailed description; while this last was the original shape of the poem, as it appears in the text of Laszberg's MS. and edition. This assertion occasioned a considerable contest, which is not yet decided. Holtzmann's proposition can only gain the victory if he succeed in showing that all the oldest German epics,—the "Beovulf," the "Hildebrandslied," and even the "Heliand," and the later popular poems, are clumsy abbreviations of broader originals.

humanizing influences of Christianity. Ominously the tale moves on. The first step has been taken towards the fulfilment of Kriemhild's dream. Brunhild's jealousy has been awakened. Although she had been conquered, yet ever and anon the wild spirit of war and contention comes upon her. On the evening of her marriage she has a contest with Gunther, who, being no longer assisted by Sigfrid, as on the former occasion, is shamefully beaten. To heighten his disgrace, the bride binds him hand and foot with her girdle, and hangs him up by a hook in the wall, from which he is not released until after abject entreaty. Sad and disconcerted, he applies next day to Sigfrid, who slips into his magic cape, contends with the bride, and overcomes her as before. But this time he takes from her, unobserved, the girdle and a ring, both of which he gives to his wife Kriemhild, a gift which is destined to be fatal to himself and spouse, and not only so, but to all their kith and kin.

But the Nemesis still slumbers. The happy pair set out for the land of Sigfrid's parents, Sigmund and Sigelinde. Sigmund resigns the crown in favour of his son. Kriemhild becomes the mother of a son, who is called Gunther, after his uncle. Brunhild also bears a son, who is called Sigfrid. For ten years Sigfrid and his spouse live in undisturbed happiness. He, the great ruler, not only of the Netherlands, but also of the more distant country of the Nibelungs, and the possessor of vast treasures ; she, the happiest of queens.

But ten years have not extinguished the fire that burns in the bosom of Brunhild. "How is it," she

often says to her husband, "how is it that all these years Kriemhild has never visited our court? Is not Sigfrid our liegeman, and yet these ten years he has done no suit or service?" Gunther, who is well aware that Sigfrid's arrival will only bring to light his disgrace and shame, replies soothingly, "How can I bring them hither, when they live so far away? That were too much to require of them." But Brunhild knew how to touch the strings of her husband's weak though haughty heart: "Were he twice as great and rich, and lived twice as far off, yet he must obey, whatever his lord commands him. Besides, how delightful it would be to see Kriemhild again, so modest, so graceful, and so kind." Gunther yields, and sends messengers to Sigfrid, who find him in Norway, at the castle of the Nibelungs, and bid him to a festival at Worms, on Solstice-day, the usual period for such entertainments. Sigfrid, after taking counsel with his father and followers, resolves to accept the invitation. Accompanied by Kriemhild and the aged Sigmund (his mother, Sigelinde was dead), and a thousand noble knights for his retinue, he sets off for Worms, joyous and unsuspecting, and bearing with him rich presents for the Burgundian court. His little son, Gunther, who is left behind, is fated never to see his father and mother more.

Arrived at King Gunther's court, they meet with a brilliant reception. Thousands of knights flock to the tournament from every side. The kings, with their escort of gay cavaliers, ride in sumptuous apparel through the streets; noble dames and beauteous damsels

appear at the windows. The sound of trumpets, of drums, and flutes re-echoes through the spacious city on the Rhine. But amid these festal strains ever and anon the shrill tones of jealous hate fall upon the ear; the hoarse voices of contention drown the sweet murmurs of the flute, and give the murderous signal which shall soon affright the halls of the castle and the streets of the city, shall soon fill every land, and shall make many a heart to quake, even when a thousand years have rolled by.

The two queens sit beside each other, as in the fair days of yore. Kriemhild thinks of those days, when she only enjoyed in prospect the happiness which is now hers in reality. "I have a husband," so she says in the innocence of her loving heart, "who deserves to be lord of all these kingdoms." The fatal spark had fallen. "How," rejoins Brunhild, with darkening visage, "How were that possible? These kingdoms belong to Gunther, and will continue so." Kriemhild, lost in loving affection for her lord, does not hear the words of rising passion, and goes on in her careless prattle. "Look at him, how noble he looks yonder, marching before the rest like the moon before the stars. Therefore it is that my heart is glad." Brunhild rejoins that Gunther takes precedence before all the other princes; and Kriemhild retorts that Sigfrid is as good as Gunther. Then it is that the rage of Brunhild bursts forth. "When thy brother wooed and won me, Sigfrid himself said that he was Gunther's vassal, and as such I have always considered him." Kriemhild begs her to desist from these observations, for her



brothers had not given her to a vassal. "I shall not stop," retorts Brunhild; "thy husband was and is nought but a liegeman." Then it is that the just wrath of Kriemhild finds vent: "Yet Sigfrid is more noble than my brother Gunther; besides which, it is strange that he has never paid him all these years either service or tribute." "Well, we shall see," replies the other, "whether people will show you as much respect as you me." "Yes, we shall see," cries Kriemhild, "whether, in the procession to church, I shall not take precedence of you."

The queens go separately to the Minster. Brunhild stops before the building and waits for Kriemhild. When the latter arrives, she bids her stand still with an imperious voice, in the face of all her train, "for a vassal's wife has no right to go before her queen." Then for the first time, the gentle woman flies into a rage. "It beseemeth not thee to talk. Sigfrid wooed and then deserted thee. He, and not Gunther, was thy vanquisher, so 'tis thou who art a vassal's wife;" and then, repenting of her words as soon as she had uttered them, she adds, "Thou art to blame for this quarrel. It grieves me much, I do assure thee. Most ready am I to be thy true friend again." But no. As they came out of the Minster, Brunhild stops Kriemhild, and requests her to explain, in order that she may take sanguinary vengeance on Sigfrid, if he has boasted of her love. Kriemhild shows the ring, and then—upon Brunhild saying that she had stolen it—the girdle. Humbled, yet breathing vengeance against Sigfrid for betraying her, Brunhild resolves upon his death. But



it is not true that Sigfrid has ever boasted of his triumphs. All he had told Kriemhild was, that the ring and girdle once belonged to Brunhild. And so he says, "They have both forgotten themselves. It grieves me sorely, Gunther, that my wife hath troubled thine. Let us, and the women also, say no more about it."

But Brunhild's wrath is not to be appeased. Boiling with impotent rage, she keeps her chamber, when Hagen finds her, and hears from her own lips the deep insult that had been put upon her. His queen weeps. She has been insulted by a vassal; he must die. Kriemhild's three brothers, and Ortwin of Metz are consulted. Giseler alone, the youngest of the three, looks on the affair as a mere woman's quarrel, and far too insignificant to be atoned for by Sigfrid's death. The rest, Gunther among the number, after a short hesitation, resolve that he must die. A false alarm of war is to be spread; Sigfrid is sure to go on the expedition, and at a favourable opportunity he is to be slain.

Before leaving for the war Hagen waits on Kriemhild to bid her the customary adieu. She has almost forgotten the dispute, and has not the faintest suspicion that she sees before her one who has sworn the death of her husband. "Hagen," she says, "we are relations. To whom rather than to thee shall I entrust the safety of my Sigfrid? Guard him well, I charge thee on thine allegiance. When he bathed in the dragon's gore there was one spot between his shoulder-blades which was covered by a broad leaf of the linden. Here he is

vulnerable. When the war spears are flying thick one might strike him there. So shield him, Hagen, I beseech thee." "Well," says the traitor, "but sew, I pray thee, a mark, my lady, on his dress, just in the exact spot which I am to guard." And so the unsuspecting creature sews a silken cross on her husband's tunic with her own hand. The expedition being now no longer necessary, it is changed into a grand hunting party. Sigfrid takes a last farewell of his affectionate spouse. Her soul is troubled with dark forebodings, just as it was in the days of her childhood, when she dreamt of the falcon and the eagles; for she has had a dream where she saw two cliffs fall upon Sigfrid, in the ruins of which he disappears. Sigfrid comforts her. Nobody can be his foe; he has been kind to all. He will soon be back again. She fears, but what and whom she knows not. Hagen, the only one that could be a source of alarm to her, she thinks she has made her friend. But she parts from Sigfrid with the words, "Right sorry I that thou dost leave me thus." The chase is over. The hunters are wearied and thirsty, but they have nothing at hand to slake their thirst withal. Hagen, however, bethinks him of a fountain in the neighbouring forest, whither, by his advice, they repair. The wide-spreading linden that shades the fountain is in sight, when Hagen expresses a wish to have a specimen of Sigfrid's renowned speed of foot. "Let us race to the fountain," is Sigfrid's reply; "I will retain my coat and spear and shield; you throw yours aside." Off they set, bounding like panthers; but Sigfrid comes in far the first. He then lays

down his arms, and waits till the king comes up and drinks, before venturing to quench his own thirst. When Gunther has drunk, he also stoops down to the spring. While he is so engaged the treacherous Hagen removes the arms out of his reach and darts the spear right through the cross mark on Sigfrid's back. Mortally wounded, he springs to his feet to take vengeance on his murderer. The only weapon left him, however, was his bejewelled shield, with which he rushes upon Hagen. Out fly the precious stones with the violence of his blows. Hagen is smitten to the earth, and the shield is dashed to pieces. But the hand of death is upon the hero. His cheeks grow pale and his feet totter, and the husband of Kriemhild sinks down among the flowers which are bedabbled with his heart's blood. "Cowards," he cries to his murderers, "it is thus ye have rewarded my fidelity; it is thus that ye treat your blood relations." The Burgundian knights now rush to the spot, and break out into loud lament. Gunther too is heard bewailing. Waking for a moment from his death-trance the murdered man exclaims, "Why weep for the mischief ye yourselves have done? It were better omitted." The fiendish Hagen mocks at all alike, and rejoices at the catastrophe. This draws one more sentence from the dying man. "Had I but known your murderous intent, defence had been an easy thing. Alas! for thee, my wife, Kriemhild. Alas! for my son, that one can say of him that his nearest kin were guilty of murder;" and then, still thinking of his best-beloved, he says, "Noble King Gunther, if thou canst still be true to any one, then let me commend to

thee my wife. She is thy sister; protect her as becomes a prince. Never again shall I be seen by my father and my men." And so he dies. His corpse is placed on a gold-red shield and carried to Worms, on the Rhine. It is proposed by some that they shall say he was slain by robbers. "Not so," cries Hagen; "what reck's it if Kriemhild know that I slew him. She has insulted Brunhild too deeply for me to care whether she weeps or no."

They arrive at Worms, and the wretch, Hagen, deposits the dead body at Kriemhild's door, being well aware that she will see it in the morning when she goes to matins. And so it comes to pass. The domestic who precedes Kriemhild with a light bids her stop, for the corpse of a knight is lying in the street. A loud cry of horror bursts from Kriemhild. She knows who it is without being told. "They have murdered thee!" she screams. "Thy shield has not been hewn in battle. Whoever has done this shall die." Sigfrid's father and retainers are awakened by the noise, and they rush forward through the purlieus of the palace, bent on revenge. Kriemhild bids them bide their time. There was a superstition in those days, which even now is not extinct, that when the murderer approached the bier, the wounds of the murdered man would break out afresh. She resorts to this test. And just when Gunther was in the act of trying to persuade her that her husband had fallen by some unknown robbers, Hagen comes near, and the wounds begin to flow. "I know the robbers well," she cries, "and God will avenge the deed." The body is placed in a coffin and borne out to

the grave, followed by Kriemhild in an agony of woe. The coffin, rich with gold and silver, is broken open for her to take another look at Sigfrid. With her white hand she lifts up the head and imprints a kiss on his pale lips.

Sigmund and his retainers depart from Worms; but Kriemhild cannot quit the spot where her love began and had so luckless an ending. She cares not for crown or treasures, nor yet for her child, now that Sigfrid is gone. Two thoughts alone possess her mind: grief and revenge. At first grief takes the pre-eminence; but by degrees revenge asserts its power, and therefore it is that she is indifferent to her child. It may here be remarked that in this Saga, in its oldest form, no mention is made of the child. So Homer, in the classical epic, is averse to introducing characters which are of little interest for the development of the story.

For three years after the death of Sigfrid, Kriemhild vouchsafes not a word to her brother Gunther. Upon Hagen she will not even deign to look. For the purpose of reconciling their sister, the brothers send for the famous hoard (*hort*) which Sigfrid gave to Kriemhild for a wedding present, and which is guarded by Alberich in the land of the Nibelungs. For four nights and as many days twelve wagons are employed in transporting the treasure from the hollow mountain, where it lay, to the ship. On its arrival it is presented to Kriemhild, who becomes friends with the brothers, but not with Hagen. To alleviate her woe, Kriemhild spends her time in munificent deeds of charity.

It is now that her adversary Hagen again crosses her path. He fancies that her almsgiving will gain all the people to her side and make them disaffected to the king. In opposition to the wish of the brothers he seizes on the treasure. Gernot advises that they should sink it into the Rhine, which is accordingly done, an oath being taken by all that they will never divulge the spot.\*

When the Nibelung's hoard has been thus brought into the land of the Burgundians, they take the name of Nibelungen, just in the same way that Sigfrid himself was called Nibelung, or lord of the Nibelungs, on becoming possessed of the treasure.

For this reason the second part of the poem was, at the time of its composition, called "*Nibelungen Not*," while the whole now bears the name of "*Nibelungen Lied*."

In order fully to comprehend the importance of this treasure, the abstraction of which stirred up afresh Kriemhild's wrath against her brothers, and led to their downfall, we must remember what immense store the Old-Germans, at least from the third or fourth century, set upon "red gold" and jewels. Coloured robes and golden ornaments, as may be seen from the old ballads, were the customary gifts of kings. In the poem of "Beovulf," ring-giver or gold-dispenser is synonymous with "king."

But another circumstance deserves observation. Not only does the Nibelung-gold give its own name to the

\* According to the popular tradition, it was buried in the Rhine, between Worms and Lorsch, where it continues to this day.



successive possessors of it, but it also seems to bring about their ruin. Schilbung and Nibelung are slain by Sigfrid on account of the treasure. Sigfrid, the second possessor, is cut off in the zenith of his renown. And the Burgundian kings, the third possessors, are, as the poem expressly states, destroyed for not revealing where the treasure was hid. It is plain that we are here upon the dark confines of Pagan mythology. The gold is the property of the sons of darkness, of mist (*nebel*: hence Nibelungen. *Niflheim* is, in the Northern mythology, the name for the Land of the Dead).

Whoever gives himself up to the gold, falls into the power of the spirits of the subterranean world; becomes in fact a Nibelung, or doomed to death; while the gold itself is destined to pass from his hands. It is accordingly sunk into the Rhine, where the spirits regain possession of it; the idea of the fatal fascination which gold exercises on man, thus worked out, affords a glimpse at the deeply imaginative cast of mind possessed by the old Germans.\*

The period of vengeance now arrives, and we pass into the second part of the poem. In distant Hungary (Heunen or Hunnenland), Helche, the wife of Etzel, King of the Huns, dies. Her two sons had previously fallen by the side of Dietrich of Bern in the battle of Ravenna. Etzel wishes to marry again, and the widow of Sigfrid is recommended to him by his faithful counsellor, Margrave Rüdiger of Bechlarn. After some hesitation as to whether he ought to marry a Christian,

\* See the edition published by Cotta, and so ably illustrated by Schnorr.

he decides in the affirmative, and despatches Rüdiger himself to the Burgundian court with offers of marriage. Rüdiger, on his journey westward, stops at his home, Bechlarn, in Austria, and relates to his wife Gotelinde, and his daughter, the object of his journey, who, though rejoiced that he should have been selected for so honourable a mission, grieve for the death of Helche. Rüdiger arrives at Worms incognito. Hagen, however, exclaims in astonishment, "'Tis long since I saw the bold blade Rüdiger; but if I am not much deceived, this must be Rüdiger himself come from the land of the Huns." "Wherefore," asks the king, "should he come hither?" But at this moment a recognition takes place, and there is great joy in consequence. Hagen had formerly met Rüdiger at the court of King Etzel. The king and his brothers are in favour of the proposal, but Hagen is against it. "Friend Hagen," rejoins the king, "thou canst now give a proof of thy fidelity, and make it up with Kriemhild by consenting to her marriage." But Hagen remains immoveable. "Let Kriemhild wear Helche's crown, and thou wilt see what misfortunes she will cause us." Hagen alone of all the court, he who perpetrated the murder, has dark presages of the impending destruction that will follow her marriage. Kriemhild, too, declines the proposition, "God forbid that you should jest thus with a poor wretch like me. What should I have to do with a man who has already won one woman's heart?" Nevertheless she consents to see Rüdiger; but no sooner has she done this, than she begins a piteous wail for her murdered husband. Rüdiger appears the next day.

But she replies to his offers with "Margrave Rüdiger, had you known what I have endured, you would never ask me to wed again. In Sigfrid I lost more than any woman can hope to regain." Still Rüdiger renews his solicitations, when she asks time for reflection till the following day. Meanwhile, her brothers, Giselher and Gernot, reason with her. "If any can abate thy grief 'tis Etzel. From the Rhine to the Rhone, from the Elbe to the ocean, there is no monarch so powerful as he." "Weeping and wailing befit me more than royal pomp," she replies; "I can no longer queen it as of yore. My beauty is all faded." The night is spent by her in sorrowful reflection. When Rüdiger comes next day to hear her final answer, she persists in her refusal; until he says to her aside, "Had you none else in Hunnen-land but me and my true retainers, none should insult you with impunity." She raises herself in an instant at the words; the thought of vengeance filling her with new life. "Swear then," she cries, "to avenge my wrongs." Rüdiger swears, little suspecting what bloody thoughts lurk in her bosom; or that the oath will bring about destruction and woe to him and his.

Sh then gives him her hand in token of consent, and before long they set off to Hungary, her brothers bearing her company as far as Veringen, on the Danube. On the way they stop at Rüdiger's castle of Bechlarn, on the Danube, where his wife Gotelind receives her new mistress with much affection.

After a short interval of rest they proceed by way of Medelike (*hodið* Molk) to the castle of Zeizenmauer, where numberless hordes, which are subject to Attila's

sway, join the procession. At Tulna she is received by Etzel with four-and-twenty kings and princes in his train. Among those who do homage to her here are Blödel, Etzel's brother, Hawart the Bold, King of the Danes, and his retainer Iring the True. Here come Irnfrid, Landgrave of Thuringia (known in history as Hermanfrid, son-in-law to Theodoric the Great), and the Saxon Lords, Gibeke and Hornboge, and Prince Ramung of Wlachenland. But who is it that stands at the head of that group of knights with the wolf-helmets? He is tall, and like a lion about his loins, which look as if they were cast in bronze. His clear eye and kingly forehead remind her of Sigfrid, but it is Sigfrid's cheerful youth changed into the sober experience of ripe manhood, across whose brow the storms of fortune have passed. His redundant locks are confined by a kingly circlet; with his nervous left hand he grasps his sword-hilt, while his right rests on a lion-shield. It is Dietrich of Bern, King of the Goths, the greatest hero of his time, and, after Sigfrid, the most renowned in German legend, who, together with his band of Wolfings, is a guest at the court of Etzel. On their arrival at Vienna the marriage is celebrated with surpassing magnificence, and the festivities continue for seven days. But Kriemhild, the cause of all this vast concourse and jubilee, "her thoughts were far away on the Rhine, and on the happy days she spent with Sigfrid. Her eyes grew moist, but she was forced to hide her tears." And thus she descends the Danube to her new home of Etzelburg, sick at heart in the midst of her splendour.

Seven years have elapsed, when she brings forth a prince, who is christened Ortlieb. After this, six more years expire, and then the day of vengeance begins. "Many a long year I have been in a foreign land," she says to Etzel, "and none of my relations have been to see me; and people say that I am an exile who has no friends or home. Send, I pray thee, to Worms, and invite *all* my relatives to a festival." The king at once despatches the warrior-minstrels, Werbel and Swemlin, to invite the Burgundian court to an entertainment on Solstice-day.

When the envoys arrive at Worms, seven days are taken to consider whether the invitation should be accepted. Hagen strenuously opposes going. "We shall lose our life and honour. Etzel's wife will have her revenge at last." Rumold, another knight, is of the same opinion. But Gernot says, "If you are afraid, we will go alone." Hagen on this advises that if they must go they had better not go unguarded. His advice is followed. Among the multitude of retainers that join the expedition is the bold and joyous Volker of Alzei, skilled in the viol and in song, and also Dankwart, Hagen's brother. Kriemhild is full of terrible joy when she hears that they are coming. Her aim is accomplished.

Dark forebodings of the future still agitate the Burgundian court. Ute, the aged mother of Kriemhild, dreams before they start that all the birds in the land are dead. Hagen, disconcerted at the omen, would again have dissuaded them from the expedition. But, stung by the ridicule of Gernot, he determines to be of

the party ; and, on account of his knowledge of the roads, is selected as guide.

On arriving at the Danube, they find the waters out. Hagen, who goes through the lonely forest in search of the ferryman, hears the sound of splashing waters, and sees two water-sprites, or swan-maidens, bathing. Being aware that they could foretell the future, he has recourse to a stratagem for the purpose of obtaining the information he desires. He removes their clothes ; upon which the forms of the deep approach, and, to get her clothes back again, one of them says, "Great honour awaits you in Etzel's land." But the next moment the sinister voice of the other calls out of the waves, "Hagen, son of Aldrian, be warned. Go back while there is time. None of you will return over the Danube except the chaplain of the king."

By the assistance of the spirits he then finds the ferryman, whom, after a desperate struggle, he murders, casting his corpse into the water. After ferrying all the rest of the party over, he returns for the chaplain, whom, to break the spell, he hurls into the stream. "God's poor priest" at first tries to regain the boat, but is thrust back into the water by the merciless Hagen. He then makes for the shore which they had left, and which he succeeds in reaching. Hagen, when he perceives him escape, knows that all is over, and breaks the boat to pieces. Henceforward he is prepared for death.

In their passage through Bavaria they have a fight with Gelfrat, the reigning prince, in which Dankwart plays the most conspicuous part. At last they arrive



at the castle of Bechlarn, where they meet with a most friendly reception. It often occurs in real life that the destruction of all our domestic happiness is preceded by some moment of intense pleasure. So it is here. We have a beautiful picture of domestic felicity in the noble Rüdiger, with his gentle spouse Gotelind, and their blooming daughter, Dietlinde, who receive the party with the greatest hospitality. The modest Dietlinde gives them each the kiss of welcome, till she comes to Hagen, whose ferocious visage makes her shudder; but, being admonished by her father, she offers him her pale cheek. In the afternoon she again joins the festive throng, and listens to the music of Volker von Alzei. Good fellowship has reached its height, when the Burgundians sue for the hand of Dietlinde for the young prince Giselher. The betrothal at once takes place; and it is arranged that they shall marry on the return of the Burgundians homeward. Volker again delights them all with his various songs, some grave, some gay, till the hour of separation arrives. Before parting, Rüdiger presents Gernot with his favourite sword, which he has wielded in many a battle. Gernot wears it from that time forward, and the last blow he deals with it is on the head of the noble donor. Hagen also receives as a souvenir from Gotelinde the shield of her father, Nodung, which had hung up as a precious relic in Rüdiger's hall of arms.

Old Hildebrand, Dietrich's retainer, is the first to hear of their arrival in Hungary, and bears the tidings to his master, who at once rides forth to meet them. Hagen espies him coming, and says, "Up, noble lords

and kings ; yonder comes a royal band. It is the daring warriors of the Amelungs, with him of Bern at their head." Up stand the princes to receive Dietrich, who dismounts. "Welcome Gunther, Gernot, and Giselher ; welcome Hagen, Volker, and Dankwart. Know ye not how much Kriemhild still grieves for the hero from the Nibelung-land." "She may grieve for long, for that matter," retorts the unfeeling Hagen ; "he was done to death many a year ago. She had best hold to the Hun-king. Sigfrid will never come back." "How Sigfrid died it boots not now to ask," replies the Gothic king ; "enough that as long as Kriemhild lives, she threatens woe. Hagen, thou champion of the Nibelungs, beware of her." Dietrich hereupon further informs them in confidence that Etzel's wife prays each morning to God in heaven for vengeance on Sigfrid's murderers. "It can't be altered now," chimes in the merry musician, Volker ; "let us off and away to Etzel's court and wait for whatever betide."

The news of the Burgundians' approach having now reached Etzel and his queen, they go to the window and see the well-known banners just entering the castle. "Those are my relatives," cries Kriemhild ; "whoever is true to me, let him remember my sorrow." The Huns flock together to get a sight of fierce Hagen who slew Sigfrid, Kriemhild's former spouse. There he comes on his lofty steed, the dark, grey-haired warrior, with his fiery eye and fearful countenance ; his frame as if it were of wrought iron. He dismounts and approaches Dietrich. "Who is that strong warrior standing by the side of Dietrich ?" exclaims the Hun-king from the

window. An old Burgundian, who had accompanied Kriemhild hither, replies, "That is him of Tronei: his sire was Aldrian. He looks friendly there, by Dietrich's side, but he is a man of fiercest mood." And the king remembers how, in days gone by, Aldrian was at his court, and how he himself, being then but a stripling, contended in many trials of skill and strength with Hagen and Walter of Wasichenstein.

The mass of the Burgundians are lodged in the neighbourhood, under the command of Dankwart; while the kings and higher nobles take up their abode in the palace. In the midst of the bustle Hagen meets Volker, and, conscious of their approaching fate, they swear to stand by each other until death. From a window Kriemhild sees them sitting on a bench of stone, with a crowd of Huns staring at them in silent awe. She bursts into tears, and when her people demand the cause of her weeping, bids them take vengeance upon Hagen. Sixty men arm and descend towards the courtyard, led by the queen, who purposes surprising Hagen into a public confession of his crime. "I know him well," she says, "he is so insolent that he won't deny it." Volker, who perceives the crowd descending the stairs, bids Hagen be on his guard, who expresses utter contempt for such adversaries. "But, Volker," he continues, "art sure thou wilt stand by me, as I by thee?" "That will I, as long as life shall last," answers Volker. "Come one, come all, I'll never budge a foot." "May God in heaven reward thee," replies his friend, "what want I more?" This oath of mutual fidelity is preserved throughout. Were it not for this redeeming feature,

Hagen would be a perfect monster. Volker rises on the approach of the queen, but Hagen retains his seat with an air of cool defiance. But his insolence does not stop here. He places across his knee a gleaming sword, the hilt of which is set with a jasper green as grass. Kriemhild recognises it at once. It is the renowned Balmung which used to hang at Sigfrid's side. This was indeed a cruel thrust, ripping up afresh the old heart's wound. "Who sent for thee, Sir Hagen? How dared you ride hither after what you've done?" "Nobody sent for me," is the reply; "three kings were bidden here. They are my masters, and I their man. Where they are am I also." "You know surely why I hate you," she continues; "you slew Sigfrid, whom I shall never cease to mourn." "What need of mincing matters further," he bursts out. "Ay! I slew Sigfrid because the dame Kriemhild insulted the fair Brunhild. Do your worst; here am I to answer for the wrong." The signal of mortal defiance has thus been given. But a pause ensues. The Huns fear to begin the attack on Hagen armed with the sword of Sigfrid, and the minstrel Volker with his sword-fiddle-bow;\* till at last the two grim warriors rise quietly from the bench, and with firm tread stalk across to the hall, to defend their masters in case of need. The queen follows them to greet her relatives; but only to Giselher, her youngest brother, will she vouchsafe the kiss of amity. On perceiving

\* The bold minstrel was in *utrumque paratus*: to fight with stern necessity, or sweep the strings of his instrument, gay even amid the storm of fate.—*Editor*.

this, Hagen immediately fastens his helm tighter. Kriemhild then enquires for the Nibelung treasure; had they brought it with them? "The Nibelungenhort," replies Hagen, "was sunk into the Rhine, and there it will stay till doomsday." And then he adds contemptuously, "I have had enough to bring from the Rhine, what with my shield and helm, and sword and buckler." On Kriemhild's next requesting them to deliver up their arms, as was usual on a friendly visit, Hagen is against complying with the request. Suspecting that they had been forewarned by somebody, she asks who it was. "'Twas I," replied the Gothic king, boldly stepping forward, "I warned them." Abashed by the piercing open eye of Dietrich, Kriemhild stifles her rage and hurries silently away, casting, as she does so, furious glances at her foes.

Presently, after being received by Etzel, the guests retire to rest. As he enters the vast sleeping chamber, a cry of anguish escapes from the youngest brother, the newly-betrothed Giselher. Hagen and Volker keep guard without, still and motionless. Yet Volker takes his viol once more. Its clear sweet tones break the silence of the night, and sound the knell of the Burgundian race.

But no. A band of Huns who attempt to surprise the sleepers are frightened away by Hagen's terrible voice. Next day a tournament (Buhurt) is held, whereat Volker, getting from sport to earnest, kills a Hun, and a general combat is alone prevented by the firmness of the king.

Kriemhild next tries to gain over old Hildebrand,



and then Dietrich, but in vain. Dietrich reminds her that the Burgundians are her relatives, and had come relying on her good faith. They had done *him* no harm. So that Sigfrid should never be avenged by Dietrich.

At last the queen persuades Blödelin, her husband's brother, by the promise of a great reward, to attack Dankwart's Burgundians, who lodged near at hand. He goes to execute his mission. The queen returns to the banquet hall. Hither her son Ortlieb is also brought, and introduced by Etzel to the company. The king even says that the boy shall be sent to Burgundy to complete his education. At the sight of Kriemhild's son, Hagen, in a transport of fury, hints that the young prince has not long to live. The whole company, together with Etzel, are thrown into consternation at this menace, when suddenly the storm begins.

Blödel, true to his promise, had gone with an armed band to the adjoining hostel, and told Dankwart that he was come to take vengeance on him for his brother Hagen's murder of Sigfrid. By way of answer, Dankwart, at one stroke, severs his head from his body. Upon this Blödel's retainers set upon the Burgundians, and after a murderous fight the whole of the latter are slain, except Dankwart, who escapes, and rushing up the stairs in spite of the steward, who tries to stop him, gains the inner door of the royal hall.

Covered with gore, and his drawn sword in his hand, he thunders out, "Why sit you here so long, brother Hagen? Thou, and God in heaven are to blame for what's been done. Knights and knaves are all lying dead in the hostel." "Guard the door,



Dankwart, that none escape," cries Hagen savagely, springing to his feet and drawing his sword, "Now we drink the cup of remembrance, and offer up the king's wine."\* In the next moment the severed head of the innocent lad lay in his mother's lap. A second blow, and the child's attendant lies dead at Hagen's feet. A third lops off the right hand of the minstrel Werbel. Straightway Volker, then Gunther and Gernot, and lastly Giselher, rise upon the Huns, who fall in their blood one after another till the floor is covered with corpses. Volker and Dankwart guard the door to prevent anyone from entering, the former exclaiming to Hagen that two men can keep the door better than a thousand bolts. In the midst of the tumult, the queen, in an agony of terror, implores Dietrich's protection, who, though he had declined to be the minister of her vengeance, is not unmindful of the duty he owes to the spouse of his royal friend and patron. He raises his mighty voice, which resounds through the whole castle, like the blast of a buffalo-horn. The din of battle pauses for a moment at the sound, when Dietrich demands permission for himself and his followers to retire. Gunther replies that his quarrel is only with those who have murdered his men. And so Etzel, the queen, and Rüdiger, together with Dietrich and his men, are allowed to leave the hall. They have scarcely

\* "Nun trinken wir die Minne, und opfern des Königs Wein." A fearfully beautiful expression. According to the old heathen custom, at the close of the feast a cup was drained in memory of the dead (Minne originally means recollection). So here the banquet closes with a cup in memory of Sigfrid; but the drink is blood, and the cups are swords. The king's wine is the blood of his son and his friends.

gone when the butchery begins afresh, and the whole of Etzel's attendants being slain, their bodies are cast down the stairs by the Burgundians.

Hagen now appears in the doorway, and taunts the aged Etzel for retiring from the fight; while Volker derides the Huns as a pack of cowards. Stung to fury by the insult, Kriemhild promises Etzel's shield full of gold to the man who kills Hagen.

Upon this the noble Iring, Margrave of Denmark, hurls his spear at Hagen, and then attacks him sword in hand. The chambers resound with the blows struck on helm and targe; but Hagen is invincible. The Margrave then rushes on Volker, Gunther, and Gernot in succession, and lastly on Giselher, who strikes him down. But he is up again directly, and inflicts a deep wound on Hagen, with his sword, Waske. Maddened with the wound, Hagen dashes furiously on his assailant, striking fire from his helmet at every stroke of his sword, and the Dane is driven down the staircase. After cooling his temples for a brief space in the evening breeze, while Kriemhild holds his shield, Iring again rushes to the onset. Loud and fierce is the struggle, till Hagen with a blow of his sword cuts through his foe's targe and helmet, and then, before he can recover from the shock, brains him with his heavy battle-axe. Clamorous for revenge his friends rush up the stairs, but to no purpose. Irnfrid, the Thuringian, is slain by Volker; while Hawart meets with a similar fate from the hand of Hagen.

Darkness has descended on the fray, and the combatants part for a space. In the stillness of the night

the blood is heard running down the gutters into the courtyard. Hagen and Volker, though exhausted by the combat, keep their accustomed watch. At length, feeling certain what their ultimate fate must be, and weary of suspense, they demand to be let out into the courtyard below, so that they may fight and die at once like heroes, sword in hand. Kriemhild, fearful that her prey may escape her, refuses to consent. On this the love of life speaks from the lips of her youngest brother Giselher. "Alas! fair sister, I little thought, when at your invitation I came across the Rhine, to meet with such distress. What have I done that I should die in foreign land? Faithful have I ever been to thee, and never did you wrong. I had thought to find thee dear and kind. If I needs must die, let my death be quick." Moved at this touching appeal, Kriemhild demands that Hagen be delivered up. "As for you, I will let you live; you are my brothers, and the children of one mother." "We'll die with Hagen," cries Gernot, "even were we a thousand brothers." "We'll die with Hagen," adds Giselher, "faithful to the death."

Foiled in her attempt, the rage of Kriemhild knows no bounds. She causes the hall to be set on fire; and fanned by the wind the flames soon illumine the dark sky. The captives, suffocated by the smoke and heat and tormented with intolerable thirst, scream out in desperation. Let the living quench their thirst with the blood of the dead, is the counsel of the terrible Hagen. His counsel is taken.

Thicker and thicker fall the burning rafters from the roof; the gasping prisoners who survive press close to

the stone walls of the building, and endeavour with their shields to protect themselves from the scorching heat. At last the short summer night—longer than the longest night of winter—was over. All the wood of the building is consumed; and in the grey dawn the desperate remnant of the band is seen among the smoking ruins, bent on fighting to the last.

Every attempt of the Huns to take the hall proves fruitless. Their corpses again cover the stairs by hundreds. At this juncture the king turns to Rüdiger of Bechlarn as a last resource, and conjures him by his allegiance to do battle in his behalf. Rüdiger is in a great strait. If he refuses to avenge the queen, he breaks the oath he swore her thirteen years before at Worms, and is faithless to his king and host. If he responds to the appeal, he will be a traitor to those who came hither under his safe conduct. In either case he will be covered with infamy for the rest of his days. What shall he do? His strong German heart is torn asunder with the intensity of the inward struggle. At last his mind is made up. He will be faithful to his sovereign. He will sacrifice all for him—body, ay, and soul also. His men arm themselves. He himself advances to the door, and gives the Burgundians fair warning; that he may thus far at least be free from the imputation of treachery. They remind him that they have come hither under his safe conduct. Giseller fondly imagines that the father of his betrothed is come to bring them aid, but is undeceived by Rüdiger, who announces that he is come, not as a friend, but as a foe, and that he is prepared to die in the struggle. Fidelity to his king

must yield before fidelity to his friends. Ere the fight begins Rüdiger hands over to Hagen his own shield in exchange for the one that the Burgundian had received from Gotelinde as a token of friendship.

Gernot hastening to the assistance of his men, who are attacked by Rüdiger, is slain by the latter, but in the same moment he gives Rüdiger his death-wound with his own sword.

Loud lamentations for the fallen sound through the palace and reach the ears of Dietrich of Bern, who sends to enquire the cause. Shocked to hear of Rüdiger's death, he despatches Hildebrand to demand wherefore the Burgundians had done this. The Burgundians with scoffs and taunts refuse to deliver up the dead body. It is then that the mighty race of the Amelungs, with Hildebrand at their head, contrary to the orders of Dietrich, fly to arms. Volker, the sweet musician, is stricken dead by Hildebrand. Gisel er and the Gothic prince Wolfart fall by each other's hand; and Hagen, eager to avenge his friend Volker's death, rushes with irresistible impetuosity on Hildebrand, who is forced to retire severely wounded. He returns alone to Dietrich; "I am the only one left," he cries, "the rest of thy men are slain." So Dietrich advances alone towards Gunther and Hagen, who are the sole survivors of the Burgundian band, and bids them yield. "Not till the sword of the Nibelungs is broke asunder," is Hagen's proud reply. Dietrich fights with Hagen, gives him a desperate wound, then seizes him with the gripe of a lion, binds him, and brings him to Kriemhild. Gunther fares no better.

After recommending the queen to spare their lives, Dietrich retires with sad and serious mien.

But Kriemhild has not yet quaffed the cup of vengeance to the dregs. To her inquiries for the treasure, the hero of Tronei, though fettered, and mortally wounded, replies, "As long as one of my masters lives I'll not tell thee where it is hidden." She at once has the head of her brother Gunther cut off, and carries it by the hair to Hagen. "Ha! ha!" he cries, "I thought it would come to this. It's finished now just as you willed it should. The king, and Gernot, and young Giselher, they're dead and gone: all, all. None knows where the treasure is but God and I alone. You, fiend, shall never know." "Then all that's left me," exclaims the queen, "is this my Sigfrid's sword." She draws it from the scabbard, and Kriemhild, once so sweet and lovely, once so true and loving, avenges Sigfrid's death by plunging it into his murderer.

Up springs old Hildebrand, enraged that the queen should so mercilessly slay those whom his lord has commended to her mercy, and cuts her down. With a piercing scream Kriemhild falls dead by the side of her mortal foe. Thus sadly,—so concludes the poem,—the king's high feast was ended, as sadness ever follows after joy.

This tone of sorrow, with which the great epic concludes, is kept up in an artistic poem (*kunst-gedicht*), which is called in consequence the *Klage* (lament).

None of the characters in this piece moves our compassion more than the Queen Ute, the aged mother and sole survivor of the Burgundian race. She was



buried in the convent of Lorsch, heart-broken at her loss. No new facts are given in this poem; which is a mere recapitulation by Swemlin and others, who are despatched with the melancholy news to the surviving relatives of the disasters above related. It is evident, however, that the author of the *Lament*, who lived in Austria, must have had access to some version of the Nibelung strife, different from that which we possess, and that he must have been entirely ignorant of the first part of the present "*Nibelungenlied*."

This leads us to some general remarks on the origin of this poem. Of course nobody will insist, in a composition of this kind, on historical accuracy of facts or dates. The historic truth of an epic consists in a true conception and delineation of life and manners. Setting aside Sigfrid, however, in whose case inquiry is almost entirely at fault, there are some points in the poem which are historically true. Thus the three Burgundian kings are a matter of history. The same may be said of the destruction of a royal Burgundian race by Attila. Attila himself, his brother Bleda (here Blödelin), and Dietrich, who was of the blood of the Amalians, the royal race of the East Goths, are also historic personages. The transactions in which they figured must have taken place from 451 to about 500, but in the poem they are compressed into a shorter space. Attila, who died in the year 453, A.D., cannot have been contemporary with Theodoric, whose reign commenced in 489.

Still a sort of historical veracity is preserved throughout in the main features of the story; such as, for in-

stance, Attila's universal dominion, and the vast hordes under his sway,—the bloody battle of the Huns at Chalons, in the year 451, when blood was actually drunk,—and lastly, Theodoric's rule, which, as being the first German one on Roman ground, would be gratifying to the national pride. Upon the whole then, it may be assumed that the portion of the poem referring to Dietrich and Etzel could not have existed before the second half of the sixth century.

The Saga of Sigfrid, therefore, which is mythic in origin, would be, primarily, quite distinct from these Sagas of Attila and Dietrich. It is true that, in the older form of the Sigfrid's Saga, there is an Atli, and a sister who revenges herself, though not on her brothers, but on Attila for them; and it was not till the appearance of the historic Attila, the Hun-king, that this older mythic Atli became blended with the historical one. Probably this amalgamation took place after the ninth century, at the same time that the Sigfrid Saga was transformed from its mythic into its heroic shape.

It could not have been till somewhere in the latter half of the twelfth century, perhaps about 1170, that the various scattered ballads, embodying these distinct Sagas, became combined into one. The "*Nibelungenlied*," in the oldest shape in which it now exists, was committed to writing about the year 1210.

As for fixing upon any person as its author, in the strict sense of the word, this is of course out of the question. The idea that it was written by Henry of Ofterdingen has long been given up as fabulous. What happened to the poem in 1210 was confined to writing

down the current popular ballads, and joining them together, with some slight embellishment. Twenty of these separate ballads, out of which conjoined the whole poem sprung, were discerned by the late Professor Lachmann, who clearly pointed out all the additions made to the original text by the last arranger. With few exceptions, these additions are made with much skill, and were evidently the work of a genuine poet. They chiefly consist of spurious descriptions, allusions to costly articles of luxury, such as silken stuffs, and also peculiar arrangements of the metre.

These twenty ballads have been since translated, in a separate form, by Carl Simrock, by which additional light is thrown on the subject, and the startling contrast between what is original and what has been foisted into the poem becomes still more apparent.

Besides this edition of the original twenty poems on which the "Nibelungenlied" is based, there is another by Lassberg and another by Schönhuth. In Lachmann's edition the oldest form of the poem is given. Von der Hagen's text is a mixture, and, therefore, not to be depended on.

Simrock's translation into (modern) German is the best, and next to it comes that of Pfizer. Hinsberg and Rebenstock have made such alterations in the metre that the poetical value of the original is lost to us; but even in Simrock's translation there is much that falls far short of the original in freshness and power.

As may readily be imagined, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when art-poetry was all the fashion, this simple epic found fewer admirers than now.

Still it could not have been so much neglected after all, for no less than twenty manuscripts of it have been discovered belonging to that period. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, its very existence was all but unknown. Wolfgang Lazius alone, an Austrian writer of the sixteenth century, seems to have been aware of it, as he made use of it in his history of national migrations.

About the middle of the last century two manuscripts of it were discovered by Bodmer at the castle of Hohenems, in the Grisons, who printed the second part of the poem under the title of "Chriemhilden Rache" (Chriemhild's Revenge). An edition of the whole, under the name of "Nibelungenlied," was afterwards produced by Müller, the Swiss, who received in consequence the following letter from Frederick the Second, king of Prussia. "You have much too favourable an opinion of these things. To my mind they are not worth a charge of powder, and I'll have no such trash in my library." This epistle is preserved in a glass case at the library of Zurich, as an indication of what the general opinion about the poem was in those days. Johannes v. Müller was the only man of the time who esteemed the poem at its real worth. H. von der Hagen has done much towards causing it to be duly appreciated.

We shall now proceed to give a brief description of the remaining poems.

Among the Sagas about Sigfrid is a piece called *Hürnin Sigfrid* (horned Sigfrid), the language of which is of the fifteenth century, and its metre of the

thirteenth, while the subject-matter is derived from a period much more remote.\*

The account here of the youthful adventures of Sigfrid agrees with that given by Hagen in the *Nibelungenslied*; with the following exceptions. Sigfrid comes to a smith, who sends him into the forest for coal, as he pretends, but in reality that he may be killed by a dragon. Sigfrid, however, kills the monster, casts trees on the top of him and sets them on fire. The horny skin of the dragon melts with the heat, and with this Sigfrid anoints himself, and becomes invulnerable all over, except at a point between the shoulders which he could not reach. Kriemhild, the daughter of Gibich, King of Burgundy, has been carried off by a dragon, who, in the course of a year will be transformed into his original human shape, and will then marry her.

This interweaving of the mythical is not to be found in the "*Nibelungenlied*." Sigfrid, on this, starts as a lone knight-errant to her rescue. In the depths of the forest he hears her cries, but cannot discover the cave within which she is imprisoned, until at last he overtakes a dwarf riding through the thicket on a black

\* The poem of "*Hürnin Sigfried*" is known only from ancient printed editions (Frankfort, about 1538; Nuremburg, about 1560, 1585), and copied from them into Hagen and Prümmer's "*Heldenbuch*." It is in the so-called *Nibelung-strophe*, which fell into disuse in the fifteenth century.

According to Knapp (vol. iv. of the "*Archiv für Hess. Geschichte*," 1845), there is a legend current at Grassellenbach, in the Odenwald, to the effect that there is near this village the identical fountain at which Sigfrid was slain, called *Sigfridsbrunnen*. On the position of the *Gnitaheide*, see Grimm, "*Die Heldensage*," p. 41, and "*Mone, Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Heldensage*," p. 45, 1836.

steed, with a sparkling crown upon his head. From him he learns that a giant, called Kuperan, guards the entrance to the dragon's cave. This giant, he at length discovers, armed—as the legendary giants always were—with a pole of steel, four edged, and sharp as a knife; and on his head is a helmet blazing like the sun. He at once springs upon the “tiny boy,” as he disdainfully calls Sigfrid; but the latter is too nimble for him, jumping backwards and forwards five fathoms at a bound. The monster is eventually beaten, and promises to guide Sigfrid to the dragon cave; but instead of this, he breaks his word, as all giants do, and re-commences the attack, but with no better success than before. He then brings Sigfrid to a steep spot, where there is hardly footing for one man at the time, and again assaults him. A struggle for life and death ensues, till at last Sigfrid tears open the giant's wounds and hurls him down the precipice, so that he is dashed to pieces amid the loud laughter of the maiden. The fight with the dragon then begins, and so dreadful is the encounter, that the dwarves in the bowels of the hill, fearful that it will fall and crush them, bring King Nibelung's treasure out of their holes. In the end, the dragon is hewn to pieces, the damsel is rescued and marries her preserver, who becomes master of the Nibelung-treasure. The dwarf Eugel, however, one of its guardians, predicts that he will meet with an early and violent end. The poem here passes into the story of the “Nibelungenlied,” the first part of which, it would appear, went by the name of *Sigfrid's marriage*.



This very ancient notion of the transformation of men into dragons, and back again into their original forms, is an attempt to penetrate into the realms of darkness and the secrets of the incorporeal world ; and in some respects it is akin to the (Wehrwolf) superstition still existing in Germany, that men are occasionally changed into wolves, and wolves into men. The legends about giants are nothing but a reminiscence of some strange people, who dwelt of old in the countries now occupied by a later race ; answering in fact to the Cyclopes of Homer.

In spite of the mythical character of the Sagas about Sigfrid, a local habitation has been marked out for them. The spring where Hagen killed Sigfrid was shown in the Odenwald as late as the sixteenth century. In like manner, the place where Sigfrid slew the dragon (Gnitaheide, in the Northern dialect) was well known till about the end of the twelfth century. This spot, which may have been the scene of some historical incident, was between Stadtbergen and Mayence, if we are to credit the veracious account of an Icelandic traveller who lived at the above-mentioned period.

Of the poems, devoted exclusively to Dietrich of Bern, the mention of two must suffice : Ecken Ausfart (Ecke's expedition), and King Laurin.

The first of these is written in the Berner Ton, that is, in strophes of thirteen lines each. The metre is brisk and lively ; and the first two-thirds of the poem contain fine poetic features. Parts of the tale savour of a very remote antiquity. The plot is as follows:—Three strong warriors in Heathen land, Fasolt, his brother Ecke (Egge), and the wild Ebenrot, sit in their hall and

talk of heroic deeds. "Sir Dietrich of Bern," who has vanquished the giant Grime and his wife Hilte, is pronounced to be the boldest of the bold. This excites Ecke's martial ardour; and, upon the requisition of one of three queens, who overhear the conversation, he undertakes to bring them Dietrich as a prisoner. Having, by the aid of the queen, been equipped in the coat of mail (Brünne) once worn by King Otnit, and afterwards by Wolddietrich; also with shield and sword, he sallies forth on foot, no horse being equal to his weight. As he springs like a leopard through the bushes, his helm hitting against the branches sounds like a bell, terrifying the startled game. At length he arrives at Bern, and as he goes through the streets, his golden mail glistens, so that the people fly before the man "who stands in the midst of fire." Learning from Hildebrand that his master is in the Tyrol, he sets off in pursuit, and finds on the road three men slain, and another who has been wounded by the Bernese. By this man's direction he follows the track of Dietrich, and comes upon him towards evening. At first the Bernese champion refuses to dismount; but, subsequently, on being taunted with cowardice, he does so, and a furious fight begins by the light of the setting sun. Night separates the combatants, and they keep watch and sleep in turns. At dawn Ecke awakes his adversary, in genuine giant fashion, by a kick of his foot. The struggle is renewed; the voices of the song-birds heralding the day are drowned in the din. Dietrich is hard pressed by his opponent; his helmet Hildegrim smeared with blood; his shield with the red

lion hacked to pieces. He retires into the thicket, which serves him as a shield. At this moment a little dwarf whispers him from a tree overhead to put his trust in God. Upon this he attacks Ecke with fresh vigour, who fancies he has two fighting against him. Ecke is overthrown; but being set free again attacks the magnanimous victor, who repents him that he has spared his life. Hurlled to the ground for the third time, Ecke is summoned to yield, but only answers with scoffs. And Dietrich at last pierces him with his sword through the joints of his harness. But no sooner is this done than he discovers, from a ring which Ecke wore, the name of his antagonist, and bewails his death. In the death-struggle Ecke springs from the ground and then falls back dead. At first Dietrich scruples about taking the coat of mail, which is unscathed, for fear people should say that Ecke had been murdered. Subsequently, after shortening it so as to fit him, he takes it, as well as Ecke's helm, into which he fastens a carbuncle taken from his own helmet. He then digs a grave eighteen feet long, in which he places the corpse, with the words "God be gracious to thee, my Ecke," and rides away.

This poem of the thirteenth century is still extant in the shape in which it must have been sung by the minstrels of that period. Long after this—even as late as the beginning of the seventeenth century—it was still a popular song.\*

\* A fragment of what was most likely the oldest shape of the "Eckenlied," Docen Misc. ii. 194. See 244 strophes from a MS. of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, edited by Joseph von Lassberg (Meister Seppen von Eppishusen), 1832; and by Schönhuth, the Klage, with Sigenot and

King Laurin, on the other hand, has not reached us in the form of a popular song—at least of the thirteenth century. The extant version of it is by Kaspar von der Rön, a popular singer of the fifteenth century.\*

The plot is as follows:—Laurin, King of the Dwarves, has a beautiful rose-garden in the Tyrol, which is fenced in by a silken-thread instead of a wall. Whoever broke this thread had his hand and foot lopped off. Many a one had suffered this penalty, when Dietrich of Bern and Wittich started off to put down the nuisance. Dietlieb of Styria, whose sister Similde had been carried off by Laurin, and who is in the compulsory service of the ravisher, has to fight with the adventurers. Peace is brought about by the intervention of Hildebrand. But the treacherous Laurin inveigles the strangers into a hollow mountain, sends them to sleep by a magic potion, and then throws them into a dungeon. Dietrich awakes, and, in his rage on discovering where he is, breathes flames from his mouth, and burns his bonds asunder. He performs a similar service for his fellow-prisoners. A long fight ensues, Laurin being protected by a magic ring, but at last he is taken captive. This time Dietlieb is against the Dwarves, and in the end liberates his sister. Laurin is taken to Bern (Verona), where, according to one story, he gets his living as a conjurer; according to another,

Eggenlied, 1839. An old edition of 1491 (repeated often till 1577) has 284 strophes. The text in v. d. Hagen's "Heldenbuch," 1820, is after Kaspar v. d. Roen's version, with arbitrary additions from the old edition.

\* Possibly there was a version of Laurin as early as the twelfth century. Ettmüller's edition, "Kuneech Luarin," 1829, is after a version of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, but it is deficient in criticism.

he receives Christian baptism. From this Saga Fouquè took the best parts of his "Magic Ring," which, with "Thiodolf's Farten," is the only German romance of chivalry (Ritterroman) deserving the name.

The above two poems, as also those of the "Giant Sigenot," "Dietrich's Fight with the Dragon," and "Dietrich's Flight to the Huns,"—all refer to a period anterior to his contest with the Burgundians. The legend of Dietrich is, in fact, as follows:—Driven from his kingdom by his uncle Ermanrich, he flies to the court of King Etzel, by whose aid he conquers his uncle at the battle of Raben (the historic battle of Ravenna between Dietrich and Odoacer, in the year 493). After this he stops twelve years longer at Etzel's, returning home, subsequently to the fight with the Burgundians, after thirty years' absence. The mythical stories, which primarily were told of Sigfrid, were by degrees transferred to the originally historic personage Dietrich. This is true of the fire-breathing anecdote, which is to be found in many other poems besides "Laurin." Even Dietrich's sudden death in 526 A.D. received a mythic colouring. Thus he is feigned to have been carried off by spirits nobody knows whither; or he is living in a wilderness, where he will fight with dragons till doomsday. A hero such as Dietrich could never perish out of the memories of the people, any more than Barbarossa, who, though likewise a veritable historic personage, is invested with the same supernatural character.

In the *Rabenschlacht* (Battle of Ravenna) Dietrich is in connexion with Etzel, but not with the Burgun-



dians. This poem, which at the bottom is good and ancient, is written in strophes of six lines each. In its present shape, however, it dates from the fourteenth century, a period when popular poetry began to decline. The sons of Etzel, Scharf and Ort, have, contrary to the will of their mother Helche, gone with Dietrich to Ravenna, to assist him against Ermanrich. Dietrich, who has promised their mother to be responsible for their safety, leaves them, together with his own brother Diether, under the care of Ilzan. Eager, however, to join in the fray, they ask and obtain permission to ride towards the city. As ill luck would have it, they come across Ermanrich's follower, the terrible Wittich, who rushes upon them with his sword Mimung. For a whole day they fight, and at last one brother is slain; when the old warrior advises the other stripling to retire, as he would be loth to slay him also. The lad, however, bent on avenging his brother's death, refuses the offer, and in spite of his spirited resistance meets with his death-wound. A similar fate overtakes Diether, Dietrich's brother. Dietrich, on hearing of the sad fall of the Hun princes, advances on Wittich, who, not waiting for his furious foe, springs into the sea, and is received by Wâchilt, a mermaid. Hereupon follows a touching lament by Queen Helche on seeing her sons' horses return with their saddles empty, and hearing from Rüdiger, after a long silence, "Yonder they lie upon the Raben heath!" She curses Dietrich for not protecting her sons according to his pledge, but forgives him afterwards on seeing how afflicted he is at their loss.



In the "Rabenschlacht," as we have it at present, several unimportant personages are introduced; some also, who must have been unknown to the original Saga. It is evident that it is meant to be an imitation of the "Nibelungenlied;" the opening words in both are the same; but the effect of the poem is only marred in consequence. Nothing can be more awkward than the introduction of Sigfrid, who has nothing whatever to do with the story.\*

The *Rosengarten zu Worms*, the last poem belonging to these sets of Sagas that we shall mention, is another still more curious instance of jumbling Sagas together. At the time when epic invention was on the decline, somebody conceived the humorous idea of making Sigfrid and Dietrich,—who in the original Sagas never do or can meet,—come into hostile collision with each other. The poem before us was the result of this bright idea. The story is on this wise. Kriemhild holds court at Worms, where she has a beautiful rose garden (the name *Rosengarten* is still to be met with at Worms), full of magic wonders. This garden is under the wardership of Sigfrid and other Burgundians, whose task it is to keep off all intruders. In case, however, of their being overcome, Kriemhild's father, Gibich,—such was his name

\* The poem on the battle of Ravenna is printed in the second volume of the "Heldenbuch," by Hagen and Primisser, and repeated in the first volume of Hagen's "Heldenbuch" of 1855. Both editions are uncritical. Ettmüller has made a bold and not infelicitous attempt to separate the story of the death of the sons of Etzel and Helchen from the "Rabenschlacht," and make it an independent epic. The six-lined strophe he has here converted into one of four lines, "Daz maere von vroun Helchen sünen. Aus der Ravennaschlacht ausgehoben von L. Ettmüller. Zürich, 1846.

in the oldest and most genuine traditions,—promises to hold his kingdom under the suzerainty of the victor, who is also to be rewarded with a wreath of roses and a kiss from Kriemhild. Hereupon Dietrich of Bern, urged by Hildebrand, undertakes the adventure and conquers Sigfrid. The contests are described with animation, and quite in the old popular tone. The characters of the traditional personages, Hagen, Hildebrand, and Dietrich, are well kept up, only that Kriemhild is from the very first a domineering and almost barbarous kind of person. Ilsan, however, Hildebrand's brother, is the chief figure of the piece. It is drawn with evident zest, and is eminently characteristic of the popular taste of the time. He has been twenty years a monk, and is grown old and grey; but as there is a difficulty in procuring a twelfth warrior to go upon the expedition to Worms, he is sent for from the monastery to join it. Heavy knocks are heard at the door of the building, and Ilsan, from inside, vows vengeance upon the intruder. A monk, who looks out, reports that it is an old man with three wolves on his shield, and a golden serpent on his helmet. "That must be my brother Hildebrand," says Ilsan. "And at his side there is a youth on horseback, of warlike mien, and bearing on his shield the device of a grim lion." "That is Sir Dietrich," cries Ilsan; and the gate is at once thrown open. "Benedicite, brother," is Hildebrand's salutation to the monk, who only imprecates a curse on him for being everlastingly engaged in war; but upon learning that he too is invited to go on a fighting expedition, the martial propensities of the greybearded friar awake within him.

He flings away his cowl and cloak, disclosing to view the dress of a man-at-arms which he had always worn beneath it. "A capital pastoral staff that," remarks Dietrich, pointing to his sword. Ilsan, having obtained the abbot's permission, sets off at once, pursued with all sorts of imprecations by a tribe of reverend brothers, whom he used to pull about by the ears and beard for not obeying his orders. No sooner does he arrive at Worms than he gives the rein to his real nature, rolling in the flower beds, fisticuffing whoever comes in his way, fighting in a most unclerical manner; and on receiving the kiss from Kriemhild after the victory, rubbing the skin off her cheeks with his rough beard. The monks who cursed him are not forgotten. On his return he brushes their heads with his rose-chaplet till the thorns draw blood; and, on their declining to help him to confess his sins, he ties them together by their beards and hangs them up across a pole. The above is a picture of the rude but popular order of Mendicant Friars, as contrasted with the genteeler order of Benedictines. For centuries, Ilsan the monk was a favourite character among the masses in Germany. The carvers in wood of the fifteenth century had a special liking for him, and his name continued to be proverbial deep into the time of the Reformation.

The monk in "Rabelais," and in Fischart's "Gargantua," are, in their best features, copies of the Monk Ilsan. The poem under consideration was the last creation of the Epic Muse. Composed before 1295, it soon got spread about far and wide in a variety of versions, and maintained its popularity till the old ballads and sagas

had been entirely forgotten. It was not till late in the seventeenth century that its memory became extinct.\*

Of the North Sea Sagas, the poem of "Gudrun" is the only one with which we are acquainted. It was discovered about forty years ago.

The sea, with its waves, its storms, its ships, and its vikings, is here laid open to our view.

Unlike the "Nibelungenlied," where woman is portrayed in all her most transcendent charms, but afterwards becomes all that is fearful and horrible, the character of the heroine Gudrun is exalted and gentle throughout. In short, all the characters, from first to last, are sustained with a truth and fidelity not to be surpassed.

We have here the legendary history of three generations;—first, of Hagen, king of Ireland, and his youthful adventures; next of his daughter Hilde, who was wooed by Hettel, the Frisian king; and, lastly, of Gudrun, the daughter of Hettel and Hilde.

To begin with the second part, the wooing of Hilde by Hettel. Horant and his followers, Frute and Wate, have arrived as King Hettel's ambassadors at the Irish court. The gigantic Wate soon manages to place himself on the very best terms with the court ladies, who archly inquire which he prefers, the danger of the

\* The "Rosengarten" has been handed down in four different forms. The first is the basis of the version in the "Heldenbuch." The second, now lost, of Kaspar von der Roen's version (see a subsequent note). A third has been edited, with an excellent preface, by W. Grimm, "Der Rosengarten," 1836. The fourth, of which there are two MSS. extant, but which vary from each other, is in Hagen and L'rimisser's "Heldenbuch," vol. ii.

battle-field or their society? The giant, who in fight was as impetuous as the wild boar, answers without reflection, that he is fond of lady's bower, but fonder still of the battle-field. The court ladies laugh loudly at this reply, and inquire whether he has a wife and children at home. Meanwhile, in the stillness of the evening, the sea-washed palace resounds with Horant's wondrous music. Ravished by the tones of the royal singer, the very birds break off their evening song. Next morning, when he resumes his lay, they again become mute; all the sleepers in the palace are awakened; the king and queen come out upon the battlements; and their daughter says, "Dearest father mine, oh! make him sing once more."

At eventide the Danish king lifts up his voice for the third time, which rings more sweetly than ever the bells were known to ring. The workmen forget their tasks; the sick believe they are well again; the beasts of the forest cease to feed; the insects in the grass and the fishes in the wave intermit their restless motion. And the singer wins the maiden he had been sent to woo. She goes with him over the sea, and becomes King Hettel's bride.

Their children are Ortwin and Gudrun. Hartmut, a son of the Norman king, sues for the hand of the latter; but an ancient feud between the two families proves fatal to his wishes. Another lover appears in the person of Herwig, king of Seeland, and wins the hand of Gudrun with his sword. Shortly after their betrothal, he sets off with her father for a distant land. During their absence, the rejected suitor, Hartmut, and

his father, King Ludwig, surprise the castle and carry off Gudrun. The robbers are pursued by Hettel, Herwig, and Wate, who come up with them on an island in the North Sea, Wulpensand, or Wulpenwerd. Here a bloody battle is fought, renowned through Germany in many an ancient ditty. As avalanche upon avalanche is borne down the mountains after a storm, so the spears fly in quick succession. The combatants, who stand up to their armpits in the sea, dye the water with their blood all around, as far as one might cast a javelin. As evening approaches, Gudrun's father is slain by the Norman king. The sun has already set, but Wate in his rage and fury, makes it daylight again with the sparks he strikes from the helmets of the foe. But the increasing darkness rendering it hard to distinguish friend from foe, the combatants separate. In the night, however, the Normans make off with their booty, threatening Gudrun and her maiden with instant death in the waves if they raise a cry for succour.

The Frisians have been so weakened in the struggle that pursuit is out of the question, and Wate is compelled to return in silence to the castle which he had so often entered with shouts of triumph. To the inquiry of the agonized Queen Hilde, "Where is my lord, oh! where my friends?" he answers briefly, "I'll not deceive thee, they are slaughtered all:" "when the new race has come to man's estate, we'll have revenge."

Amid sighs and tears the Norman coast is descried by Gudrun, with the castles on the shore. The old



king addresses her kindly, and tells her that all she sees is hers if she will marry Hartmut. She would rather die, she replies, than marry him and break her plighted troth. In a paroxysm of rage the wild Norman chief seizes her by the hair and casts her overboard into the sea. Hartmut jumps after her. He is just in time to seize her by her yellow tresses, and drags her into the ship. Hartmut's mother, Gerlinde, at first receives Gudrun with kindness, but finding her inexorable, proceeds to maltreatment; and she who was born to a crown is forced to perform the most menial offices, such as lighting the fires and washing the linen on the sea-shore. Nevertheless, she continues patient and true, and submits to every humiliation.

At last, after many a long year, the time is come when a new generation is old enough to undertake her liberation. After a dangerous voyage the Frisian warriors arrive at an island, from the lofty trees of which they can discern the distant Norman towers. Gudrun, as was her daily wont, repairs to the shore to wash linen, when an angel in the shape of a bird—(a swan-maiden who can foretell the future, such as appear in the “*Nibelungenlied*”)—comes to comfort her. Regardless of herself, Gudrun's first words are, “Does Hilde live, mother of poor Gudrun? My brother Ortwin; Herwig, my betrothed, are they alive; Horant and Wate too?”

On returning home she is scolded by Gerlinde for idleness; and very early next morning, although it was before Easter, and fresh snow had fallen in the night, she is sent out barefoot to the shore to finish her washing. This very morning Ortwin and Herwig, who had gone

out to gain intelligence, arrive in a boat at the spot where poor Gudrun is shivering in the frost, her beautiful hair streaming over her shoulders in the wintry blast. The two warriors approach the maiden, and bid her "Good morrow," a mode of greeting which is very scarce with her mistress Gerlinde. In spite of her mean dress and humiliating task, they at once recognize Gudrun. She tells them that the country is strongly guarded, and all the talk is about Frisians (Hegelings), who, it is feared, will make a descent upon the coast. It being bitterly cold, the knights beg the maiden to accept their cloaks as a shelter, but Gudrun replies, "Heaven forfend that I should dress in man's attire." Her brother Ortwin next asks whether a maiden named Gudrun was not once stolen and brought to this place. While Herwig is busily engaged in comparing the features of the serving girl with those of the noble princess to whom he was once betrothed, he even calls Ortwin by name. "Alas!" says Gudrun, "were Ortwin and Herwig still alive, they would have come long ago to rescue us. I am one of the stolen maidens, but Gudrun, she's long since dead." Upon this the king of Seeland stretches out his hand, and says, "In that case thou wilt know this ring which I wear upon my finger. I am Herwig, and with this ring was Gudrun betrothed to me." The maiden's eyes light up with sudden joy, and though she would fain hide her menial condition, she is overcome, and says, "I know the gold full well, for once 'twas mine. And, see, here is the ring that Herwig sent to me." Still, it is difficult to convince her brother and her lover that she is not

married to Hartmut, and they express their horror that, in spite of her being his wife, she was condemned to such a degrading occupation. On learning the true reason of it—her love for him—Herwig wants to carry her off at once. But “No,” says Ortwin, with the genuine straightforwardness of the day, “no; what we lost in fair fight we’ll not regain by stealth. Rather than that, I’d let a hundred sisters die.”

The two princes return to the fleet and raise loud lamentations at the long humiliation of Gudrun. Old Wate bids them dye the garments red which she had washed white. Yes, that very night. The air is clear, the heaven bright with moonshine. So prepare at once to attack the castle. Gudrun, in whom her native pride has been awakened, throws the linen into the sea. For this she is beaten by Gerlinde. To escape further maltreatment, Gudrun pretends that she will marry Hartmut. The morning star is still high in heaven, when one of Gudrun’s fellow-maidens looks out of the window and sees the blaze of approaching shields and helmets. The warder also, on the battlements, soon espies the enemy, and cries, “To arms! to arms! ye Norman warriors; ye’ve slept too long—to arms!”

The fight begins. Ludwig, the Norman king, falls, fighting bravely, by the hand of Herwig. To avenge his loss the cruel Gerlinde orders Gudrun to be put to death; but her infamous design is frustrated by the noble-minded Hartmut in the very moment of its execution. Hartmut is taken prisoner, and Wate, rushing into the female apartments, decapitates the queen, in spite of Gudrun’s efforts to save her; and with her one

of Gudrun's own domestics, who, to curry favour with Gerlinde, had tortured her gentle mistress.

Hereupon the invaders return home. A reconciliation takes place, followed by a three-fold marriage, viz., between Herwig and Gudrun, Hartmut and Hildburg, a companion of Gudrun's, and between Gudrun's brother Ortwin and Ortrun, the daughter of the Norman king; the only one in the land of the stranger who had pitied Gudrun, and sought to lighten her load of misery.

A modern author would probably have made Hartmut die a hero's death, like his father, as he could not obtain the lady of his choice; but the author of Gudrun has another and a nobler object in view. The two races are to be reconciled, and the ancient feud is henceforward to be succeeded by peace and goodwill; and with this consummation the epic grandly concludes.

To the Emperor Maximilian I. we are indebted for the preservation of this poem. He caused it, with several others (*e. g.*, the "Nibelungenlied," "Iwein," and "Erec," &c.), to be transcribed, about the year 1517, in one large volume, and placed in the Ambras Library in the Tyrol. Just 300 years after his death it was again brought to light.\* The piece has been

\* The first edition of "Gudrun" appeared in vol. i. of Hagen's "Heldenbuch," 1820. This same text was put into pure Middle-High-German, but with arbitrary arrangement of the metre, by Ziemann, 1835. Vollmar's edition, 1845, is better, but the preface by Schott is of little value. Two attempts have been made lately to treat the poem of Gudrun like the "Nibelungenlied," and separate the genuine parts, which rest upon old Volksage, from later additions. Ettmüller ("Gudrun lieder," 1841) divides the whole into three epics, "Hagene," "Hagene und Hettel," and "Gudrun." Of the 1,705 strophes of the original text, 951 are rejected as not genuine.

modernized by Schulz, under the pseudonym of "San Marte," but his lyrics have quite destroyed its epic character. Gervinus's version has never been completed. That by Keller is in the original metre, which is the same as that of the "Nibelungenlied." It is a work of merit, quite equal, in short, to Simrock's version of the "Nibelungen," but it falls short of the original in freshness and delicacy.

A cursory glance will now be bestowed upon the sixth, or Lombardic, set of Sagas. It comprehends three poems, "König Rother," "König Otnit," and "Hug- and Wolf-dietrich." The first of these dates from about the year 1170.

King Rother reigns at Bare (Bari in Apulia, one of the most favourite places in the middle ages of embarking for the Holy Land). Being desirous of marrying "a well-born wife," he sends twelve retainers to Constantinople to sue for the daughter of the Emperor Constantine. Rother himself goes in disguise to Constantinople and carries off the princess. But by the artifice of a musician, who is dispatched for this purpose by Constantine, she is recovered. Upon this Rother sails to Constantinople with an immense host, and compels Constantine to restore the lady.

The second attempt was that of Prof. Müllenhof, of Kiel, "*Kudrun die echten theile des gedichtes mit einer Kritischen einleitung*," 1845. Here the preamble, by Hagen, is omitted. The story of "Hetel and Hagen" is divided into seven small parts, and that of "Gudrun" into eighteen. In this recension only 415 strophes of the traditional text are retained.

A good translation of "Gudrun" was also published by Karl Simrock in 1843. The text of Müllenhof has been rendered into modern German by Roth.

The narrative is artificial; but there are several features indicative of freshness and power, *e. g.*, the reciprocal constancy of the king and his retainers to each other. The giant band that accompanies Rother to Constantinople is described with much life. One of these monsters in a passion stamps his foot knee deep into the earth, dashes a lion against a wall, and strikes fire by rubbing a pair of millstones together. All this, however, looks very much like an obscure reference to the Crusades, and the panic of the Emperor Alexius I., the father of Anna Commena, on the arrival of the western hosts.\*

"Otnit," which is composed in the popular Nibelung measure, can hardly be older than the year 1250. King Otnit's voyage to woo a heathen princess, with which the poem commences, is exceedingly animated and life-like. After a severe contest Otnit wins the maiden, takes her home, and causes her to be baptized by the name of Sidrat. They then reign happily together for many years at home at Garda.

"Hug- and Wolf-dietrich" begins in a similar manner. Hug-dietrich woos a king's daughter in disguise, and wins her. His son Wolf-dietrich, as being the offspring of a clandestine marriage, is deprived of his inheritance by his brothers. In the war which he wages with them

\* The poem of "King Rother" appears to be derived from some old popular poet. It continually refers to another older source, sometimes called "Lied" (lay, song), sometimes "Buch." The mention in it of a Duke of Meran would indicate that the poem was composed after 1181. It was first printed in Hagen and Büsching's "Gedichte des Mittelalters," 1 vol., 1811, but incorrectly; it is given much more correctly and completely in Massmann's "Gedichte des 12. Jahrhunderts," ii. 162.



in consequence, five of his retainers are killed and the rest taken prisoners. His faithful affection for these retainers is, as it were, the pivot of the poem. "God, preserve my men" is his constant thought; his own safety is never considered. And so he marches out into the wide world, and has all sorts of adventures in their behalf with pagans, giants, and dragons. The artificial complications of the plot, for no distinct purpose, are essentially un-German, and would indicate that the saga, originally, could not have appeared in its present shape. In his wanderings, Wolf-dietrich stumbles on Otnit, whom he vanquishes. By the intervention of Otnit's wife they both become friends again, and Otnit starts with Wolf-dietrich in quest of the captives. Subsequently, Wolf-dietrich starts alone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Meanwhile Nachaol, the pagan father-in-law of Otnit, sends two young dragons to Otnit, one of which in due time devours him. The fidelity of Otnit's dog and horse is described with touching simplicity. Wolf-dietrich eventually returns, takes vengeance on the dragon, and becomes possessed of Otnit's famous coat of mail (Brünne), and also of his widow, Sidrat; which done, he renews the contest with his brothers, is victorious, and liberates his men. Finally, he resigns his empire to his son, Hugdietrich, and retires into a monastery, where he dies in a nocturnal conflict with ghosts.\*

\* Originally the story of King Otnit (more correctly Ortnit) was quite independent of the history of Wolf-dietrich; which, however, must have got amalgamated with a very early version of it. In this older shape, in which Otnit's death is recorded directly after the story of his marriage, it was edited by Ettmüller, "Künec Otnides mervart unde tod,"

These sagas, with all their merits, are not to be compared with the "Nibelungenlied" and "Gudrun;" and yet they, together with the "Rosengarten" and "Laurin," were of all others those most extensively known, even at a period when the rest of the Old German poetry had sunk into oblivion. In fact, they form the "Heldenbuch," to be mentioned below.

It is perhaps needless to state that the authors of the various poems which have been adduced are entirely unknown. By some the poems of "King Otnit" and "Wolf-dietrich" have been ascribed to Wolfram von Eschenbach; and "Rosengarten" and "Laurin" to Heinrich von Ofterdingen—an assumption requiring no confutation.

We now pass to the Art-Epics, the tales of the court poets, which, though inferior to the great national epics in simplicity and grandeur, are often conspicuous for noble ideas and beauty of diction. The first group is devoted to the French Sagas of Charlemagne. Of these our attention will be confined to the "Rolandslied," and "Wilhelm von Oranse." The second group comprehends the saga of "Der Heilige Gral" (connected with that of

1838, and in 1855 by Von der Hagen, in his (new) "Heldenbuch." In the other shape it was edited by Mone, 1821.

"Hug-und Wolf-dietrich" has never yet been printed complete in its older form (the Niebelung strophe), but partly in Oechsle's "Hugdietrichs Brautfart und Hochzeit," 1834; then (from the Vienna MS.) in "Haupts Zeitschrift für deutsches alterthum," iv. 401-462 (536 strophes). Here, however, the story of Otnit is mixed up with that of Wolf-dietrich. Wolf-dietrich, without Hugdietrich and without Otnit, is published by Hagen in his (new) "Heldenbuch," 1855, 2 vols. Here is also "Alphart's Tod."

Artus); the "Parcival" by Wolfram von Eschenbach, "Titurel" and "Lohengrin." In the third group we have the Celtic tradition of King Artus and the knights of his round table; "Tristan and Isolt," by Gottfried of Strasburg; "Erec and Iwein," by Hartman von der Aue; "Wigalois," by Wernt of Grafenberg, with a mass of other poems. The fourth group consists of elaborations of antique poems and sagas; such, for instance, as the story of the Trojan war, which appeared in a multiplicity of shapes; that of "Æneas," after Virgil, by Heinrich von Veldekin, the father of Middle-High-German poetry; and of "Alexander the Great." In the fifth group we have the legends of saints; then the chronicles and historic poems; and, lastly, the smaller tales.

The first three groups, viz., the "Legend of Charlemagne," of the "Gral," and "King Artus," are generally classed under the head of Romantic poetry, although, strictly speaking, this appellation belongs only to the "Charlemagne."

The word Romantic is in fact nothing else but the word Romanic. It was the name of the language spoken by the Italians, French, and Spaniards, and which, at the beginning of the middle ages, was formed out of the *lingua Romana*. *Romant* was the name given by the older French to poems in the popular tongue, *lingua Romana*, as opposed to the classic Latin. It was not till the sixteenth century that one of these poems was transplanted under its own name into Germany. This was the fantastic story of "Amadis," which became a great favourite with the Germans. From that time

forward the term *Romantic* was applied to everything that was fantastic and adventurous, and Romance to tales in prose full of marvellous occurrences. It is in this sense that Wieland says, in reference to his "Oberon":—

"Saddle the Hippogriffs, ye Muses nine,  
And straight we'll ride to land of old Romance."

Hence arose the strange mistake of classing the old German popular poetry under the term *Romantic*—an error which has of late been rectified; so that now nothing is understood under the term *Romantic* poetry but what can be proved to have been derived from the *Romanic* (or *Romance*) peoples.

The Sagas about Charlemagne are, in German, almost exclusively represented by the "Rolandslied," or song of Roland. This legend, which, though originally a creation of German fancy, first took root on French soil, found its way into all the countries of Europe. Besides the German, there is likewise a Latin, an Italian, an English, and an Icelandic version of it. The memory of Roland is still preserved in the Pyrenees in obscure local traditions; in the names of mountains, rocks, and flowers; while the (so-called) statues of Roland at Bremen, and elsewhere, recall his name, although these pillars were originally intended as mementos of Charlemagne's jurisdiction. The legend of Roland took its rise from an historical event of no great importance, which happened in the years 777 and 778. And here we have a good example of the relation in which saga poetry stands to history. While the historical transaction on which the legend is based is either lost sight of, or so

altered as to be almost unrecognisable ; the spirit of the age—the ideal, so to speak, of the century—when the event took place, is caught and reflected with a truth and precision which history has never reached to. Whether such a person as Roland ever existed may well be doubted. According to Eginhard, an embassy was, in the year 777, sent by the Stadholder of Cæsaris Augusta (Saragossa) to Paderborn, to supplicate the aid of Charlemagne against the Emir Abderrahman. In the following year the Emperor went to Spain, but soon after the conquest of Saragossa was recalled home by an outbreak of the Saxons. While marching through the Pyrenees he was attacked by the mountaineers and suffered considerable loss, on which occasion, as many MSS. add, Hruodlandus was slain. From this trivial incident, then, arose the Saga of “Roland.”

Charlemagne is represented as the mighty champion of Christendom ; his contest with the Moors is the contest of Christianity against heathenism ; his victory is the victory of the believer over the infidel ; and thus the death of Roland at Ronceval is an image of the company of saints, who may suffer for a while, but are in the end eternally triumphant. The national colouring in which the heroes of the “*Nibelungenlied*” are depicted here almost entirely disappear. Instead of being German warriors, the warriors of the poem rather remind us of Joshua, of Gideon, and Barak. They are one and all “Champions of the true faith, instruments in God’s hand ; and bound to die as martyrs in his cause.” It is not their sovereign and the reigning dynasty for which they fight ; it is not honour and

renown that they seek; nor yet vengeance on the foe; their end and aim is Heaven.

These ideas, which had been current in France for a hundred years,—in short, ever since Carl Martel's victory over the infidels at Tours,—now attached themselves to Charlemagne. In him, as the temporal head of western Christendom, was embodied the figure of France victorious over the heathen; and thus the exploits of his predecessors became, as it were, transferred to him.

In Kerlingen—the name by which the country of the Western Franks was known in Germany from the tenth to the fourteenth century—these legends about the great deeds of the King of the Franks must have first taken root. Subsequently, in the time of the Crusades, when Christian heroism came out in a new phase, these legends were shaped into song. About the year 1095 these songs were set down in a Latin chronicle, which went by the name of “Turpin.” Afterwards they appeared in French versions; from one of which the German poem originated.

Properly speaking, then, these descriptions of the Christian heroism, not of France, but of Germany, were not originally a poem but a story; albeit a story of grand and noble features.

The rapid action of the “Nibelungenlied” and “Gudrun” is wanting. Art is everywhere apparent: for instance, in the long-winded speeches, in the repetitions, in the chronicles of battles—told more in the spirit of an historian than of a poet—and lastly, in the frequent descriptions of the warlike dress and warlike pomp of



the South : all which features are quite foreign to the German epic in its original purity. The piece, as we now have it, is the work of Konrad, the priest, who, at the instance of Duke Henry, the Lion, translated it from a French original, between 1173 and 1177.

The poet commences with an address to God, which was afterwards imitated in many Christian poems :—

“ Maker of all things,  
King of all kings,  
Judge over all,  
To thee I call;  
Send to my mouth  
The words of thy truth.”

*etc.*

Charlemagne, warned by an angel, starts with his army and twelve princes to Spain, to fight against the infidel. He reduces all the country except Saragossa, the residence of Marsilie, the pagan king. That monarch calls a council of his vassals in this emergency. One of them, the old and astute Blanscandiz, suggests a pretended submission. The Emperor would then retire, and they might set upon the forces which he left behind. This counsel is adopted. Blanscandiz sets off for Corderes, before which town Charlemagne then lay. With palms in their hands, and accompanied by ten white mules, laden with gold, the envoys, as they descend into the valley, espy the imperial forces, and their waving banners of green, red, and white. Arrived at the Emperor's quarters, they behold on the one side fights between bears and lions, on the other, young warriors contending in knightly exercises. Music and singing meet their ears on every side. Tame eagles

sweep over the heads of the lords and ladies, and protect them from the sun's glare ; agile falcons ascend and descend through the air. In the midst of all this magnificence the Emperor is seated in tranquil majesty. His eyes gleam like the star of the morning, so that he is recognised afar off, and nobody dares ask " which is he ? " None might compare with him. His countenance was shining as the sun at midday, so that the envoys could not endure to look on him. Terrible he was to the foe, kind to the poor, victorious in war, merciful to transgressors ; an upright judge, and teacher of justice which had been taught him by angels ; and, lastly, the true soldier and servant of God.

The Emperor summons a council of his twelve princes to consider the proposals of the pagan king. Roland, Olivier, Turpin, and Naimes of Bavaria, apprehensive of treachery, vote in the negative. Genelun of Mayence, father-in-law to Roland, is for accepting the offered terms. It being at last determined to send an embassy to Marsilie, Roland volunteers his services, which are declined by the Emperor. On this, Roland proposes his father-in-law, Genelun, who curses his relative for wishing to send him on a mission of certain death. But go he must, notwithstanding. Charlemagne reaches him his glove, Genelun lets it fall ; which is considered an evil omen. On the way to Saragossa, Blanscandiz, who is aware of Genelun's hatred against Roland, persuades him to betray the youthful warrior into the hands of the Moors. Genelun concert's a plan with the Moorish king accordingly. On his return he is received with distinguished honours. His pro-

position to make Roland ruler over half Spain is listened to by Charlemagne, who on the following night is troubled with oppressive dreams. Roland starts for his government, and encounters an immense hostile force. The pagan army is thrice destroyed, and as many times renewed, while the army of the Christians gradually melts away. The pagans now rush on to the fourth and final struggle; the whole plain reverberates with their war songs, the blasts of horns, and the clank of armour. Undismayed by the immense odds, the small band of true believers presses on to the fight with joyous hearts; they dash into the very midst of the foe, and show them that Durandarte and Altecler, Roland's and Olivier's swords, are as trenchant as ever. The Lord, ever ready to help those that call upon him, did great wonders that day by the hand of his people; the helmets blazed with a fire as if from Heaven, till it seemed that doomsday was come. But still the swarthy foemen keep advancing, like the trees of the forest in multitude; heaps upon heaps fall the brave; the darkness of death overshadows their eyesight, but they cheerfully endure it all, for they have fought for a heavenly kingdom; their bodies lie among the heathen, but their souls are with the saints. Bishop Turpin bids the very small remnant pray to God for mercy, as not one will escape alive. The Emperor will avenge their death. At last Roland seizes his ivory horn with both hands, and blows so loud a blast that it drowns the din of the battle; the Emperor in the distance hears the sound, and hastens up with succours, but all are slain before he arrives,—Olivier, Turpin, and

last of all, Roland, who breaks his good horn, Olifant, on the head of a pagan, who supposing him to be dead, had come up to plunder the corpse; he next tries to break his sword, Durandarte, lest it should fall into the hands of the heathen; ten times he strikes it against a rock, but ten times to no purpose. His sword, which had served him truly in all his battles, still stands by him in the hour of death, without dent and without flaw, gleaming as in the days of victory. That sword, which had been his companion against the Lombard, the Saxon, and the Moor, he now resigns into the hands of the true warrior, Christ. To Him he prays for his Emperor, and all his Carlovingians; then he bows his head to death; from that moment to reign in everlasting bliss with the arch-angels of Heaven.

Next follows a description of Charlemagne's vengeance upon the Paynim; the lament for Roland, and the punishment of the traitor Genelun, who is torn to pieces by wild horses at Aix-la-Chapelle.

In this ancient poem there are some truly epic incidents; such, for instance, is the attempt of the Christian hero to destroy his sword, that it may serve nobody but the Lord of Heaven. (In the French version of the Saga he actually buries it in the water). The heathen Sigfrid's sword, on the contrary, when its master is no more, is made the instrument in another's hands to avenge his death.\*

\* The "Rolandslied" was first published in 1727 in the second volume of Schilter's "Thesaurus," but with great omissions; in 1838, complete, by W. Grimm, "Ruolandes Lied," with the illustrations of the Palatine MS. The French source is not yet discovered. Nearest to the

The version of this legend, executed at a later period by an Austrian poet, called the "Stricker," is but a sorry affair.\*

Another poem, which belongs to the Carlovingian Sagas, is the "Karlmainet," formerly known under the name of "Biermunt."

Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Wilhelm von Oranse" is one of the most perfect productions of the art-poetry of this period. It is based on a foreign original, which was procured for Wolfram by Hermann, Landgrave of Thuringia, but it only contains the middle part of the legend. The matter is of subordinate interest; not so the descriptions; every page abounds with fresh beauties. In the year 1250, Ulrich von Tûrheim, a writer of very ordinary powers, wrote a continuation of it; and fifteen years later, a beginning was composed by Ulrich von dem Tûrlin, an equally bad poet.†

German "Rolandslied" is "Le chanson de Roland ou de Roncevaux" (edited by F. Michel, 1837; extracts by A. Keller, *altfranz. Sagen*, i. 59). This is attributed to one Turolde.

\* The Stricker's "Karl" is hitherto printed only in the second volume of Schilter's "Thesaurus." He seems to have made use of other older German poems besides the "Rolandslied."

† The extant fragments of "Karlmainet" were published by Lachmann in 1836 in the "Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie." A later version of the work is to be found in Massmann's "Denkmäler," p. 155, and in Benecke's "Beiträge," ii. 611, under the title of "Breimunt."

Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Wilhelm von Oranse" was, together with Ulrich von Tûrheim's rhymed commencement of the Saga, first published by Casparson, 1782 and 1784, but after a bad MS., and uncritically. In 1833 it was published in a complete form by Lachmann, along with the other works of Wolfram. Of the legend of "Wilhelm von Oranse" (Guillaume au court nez) there was an older Lower-Rhenish version. See Reuss, "Fragment eines Gedichts von den Heldenthaten der Kreuzfahrer im Heiligen Lande," 1839.

The "Heimonskinder" is a saga of this period, at the bottom of which there lies considerable poetic power. It relates to the contest before Charlemagne and his vassals. But the only German version of it is a translation from a Dutch poem made about the year 1470, by one Johannes Grumelkut, alias Johann von Soest, of Hesse Cassel. This is only a tame and spiritless production.

In the poem of "Flos and Blankflos," (Fleur et Blanche fleur, Rose and Lily,) the best part is the description of the tender affection subsisting between the two chief personages of the piece.\*

The Sagas concerning the "Heilige Graal" next claim our attention. We now enter into a world of enchantment, peopled with fantastic shapes. At one time fancy revels in its most glowing splendours; at another we are in the realm of sober serious thought; and anon misty shadows are drawn across the scene. The whole may be considered as an apt reflex of the age of the Hohenstaufens, with its gravities and gaieties, its earnest convictions, and its genial taste for enjoyment.

Deep-rooted in the mythology of Hindostan, is the

No edition has yet appeared of the continuation of the legend of Wilhelm, commonly called "Der Starke Rennewart," which was written by Ulrich von Türheim as his continuation to Gottfried's "Tristan."

\* "Flos and Blankflos" (Flore and Blanscheflur) was composed by Konrad Flecke in 1230, after the French original of a certain Ruprecht von Orbent. His model is Gottfried of Strasburg. There is a very incomplete reprint of this poem in the Müller collection, vol. ii. A serviceable edition of the poem appeared at Quedlinburg, 1846, "Flore und Blanscheflur eine erzählung von Konr. Flecke."



legend of a spot in the world, secure alike from all the wants and all the cares of this life; where pleasure is to be had without labour, and happiness without alloy. A spot where there is no wish, because there is nothing left to wish for; where there is no hope, because every hope is fulfilled; a spot where the thirst for knowledge is appeased, and the soul is at peace for evermore. The same legend of an earthly Paradise is shadowed forth by Homer and Herodotus in their "Banquets of the Gods," and in the sun-tables of the pious Ethiopians. It lives, too, in the Indian legend of "The Grove of Cridavana," vocal with the hum of bees and song of birds, the abode of wisdom and of peace.

When men began to wander further and further from God, all that was left of this Paradise was one precious relic. Some fancied this was a costly cup, from which the golden gifts of Heaven streamed upon mankind; others that it was a shrine preserved in a temple, like the Caaba at Mecca.

This pagan legend was seized by the reflecting mind of the middle ages, and converted into a symbol of the Christian church upon earth.

A precious stone of matchless brilliancy, so runs the Christian legend, was wrought into a cup. This cup, which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, was the one used by our Saviour at the Last Supper, and the same which caught the blood that flowed from his pierced side after the Crucifixion. Hence the vessel became endued with a mysterious power. Wherever it was, there were good things in abundance. Whoever

looked upon it, even though he were sick unto death, could not die that week; whoever looked at it continually, his cheeks never grew pale, nor his hair grey. This vessel is the Heilige Graal (dish or cup). Every Good Friday a white dove descended from Heaven with the host, and placed it on the vessel, which was supported at one time by floating angels, at another by spotless virgins. No greater honour can be conceived among men than to be its keeper and guardian; but it is an honour of which not every man is worthy. A self-denying, pure, and lowly-minded people, such, and such only, may aspire to the honour. Its defenders form a special order of chivalry; valiant in fight, prudent and wise, true to the gentler sex, and faithful to the Lord of Heaven. They are called Templars, from the temple where the vessel is preserved (Templeisen). In this name there is an evident allusion to the Knights Templars, who, as they existed originally, were the very ideal of Christian heroism. For many a year after Joseph of Arimathea had brought this vessel into the West, no one was found worthy to be its guardian, until Titurel, son of a king of France (Anjou?), brought it to Salvaterre, in Biscay, where he built for it a temple on Montsalvage, and a castle for the knights who were to guard it.\* The top of this hill was of polished onyx, which shone like the moon. The ground-plan of the temple and adjacent

\* On the Saga of the "Gral," which is still obscure, see Joseph Görres' "Einleitung zum Lohengrin.—San Marte (Schulz) Leben und Dichten Wolframs von Eschenbach," ii. 357; and Simrock's "Uebersetzung des Parcival," i. 481.

buildings was laid out in a single night by the power of the holy vessel. The temple itself was one hundred fathoms in diameter. Around it were seventy-two chapels of an octagonal shape. To every pair of chapels there was a tower six stories high, approachable by a winding stair on the outside. In the centre stood a tower twice as big as the others, which rested on arches. The vaulting was of blue sapphire, and in the centre a plate of emerald, with the Lamb and banner of the Cross in enamel. All the altar-stones were of sapphire, as symbols of the propitiation of sins. Upon the inside of the cupola, surmounting the temple, the sun and moon were represented in diamonds and topazes, and shed a light, as of day, even in the darkness of the night. The windows were of crystal, beryl, and other transparent stones. The floor was translucent crystal, under which were all the fishes of the sea carved out of onyx just like life. The towers were of precious stones inlaid with gold; their roofs of gold and blue enamel. Upon every tower there was a crystal cross, and upon it a golden eagle with expanded wings, which at a distance appeared to be flying. At the summit of the main tower was an immense carbuncle, which served, like a star, to guide the templars thither at night. In the centre of the building under the dome was a miniature representation of the whole, and in this the holy vessel was kept.\*

\* "Sulpiz Boisserée über die Beschreibung des Tempels des Heilig. Grals," Munich, 1834 (also in the "Transactions of the Munich Academy, 1835," i. 307). The description is to be found in the "Jüngere Titurl," edited by Hahn, 1842, strophe 311.

The above description at once reminds us of the temple of the new Jerusalem in the Apocalypse ; but at the same time it is evidently meant as a glowing ideal of German architecture generally. The chapel of the Holy Cross near Prague, in which the crown jewels of Bohemia are preserved, is an exact model of the magnificent temple just described. It was built by the Emperor Charles IV. The reputed Sangreal (*il sacro catino*) has been preserved for centuries at Genoa ; for some time it was at Paris. In fact it existed at the time when the poem was written, for the reader is specially warned against believing in its virtue or authenticity. All round the temple was a thick wood of ebony, cypress, and cedar trees, through which nobody could penetrate unbidden ; in the same way that none can come to Christ, unless he be called of Him.

For many centuries this temple flourished in all its original grandeur, until at length the people of the West grew so ungodly, that they were no longer thought worthy to have it in the midst of them. So the sacred vessel, temple and all, were transported by angels into the East, the land of medieval fairy-tales and wonders, the land of Prester John.

The above legend was, according to Wolfram von Eschenbach, first put into definite shape by the Moors in Spain. It was then probably put into its Christian dress by the Spaniards, and became further poetically developed in France and Germany. Still it is not to be found in any independent poem in the German language, but is mixed up with the British legend of King Arthur

and the Round Table, which has really nothing to do with it.

Artus, or Arthur, is the old national hero of Britain, the champion of the Celts against the inroads of the conquering Germanic races. As a nation, the Celts have ceased to be. But by a sort of poetical retribution, this Saga, the embodiment of their national consciousness, has ruled supreme for near a thousand years throughout the whole Romanic and Germanic world.

At Caerlleon (the Castle of Leon), on the Usk, in Wales, the monarch keeps court, with his beautiful Queen Ghwenhwywar (in Romance, Ginovre). They are surrounded by a glittering throng of knights and ladies; the former a model of gallantry and valour, the latter of feminine grace and virtues. Foremost among this brilliant assemblage are twelve knights seated at a round table. They are the bravest of the brave, the noblest of the noble, and form a court of chivalry. To be one of their number is the highest honour to which a knight can aspire;--to be excluded from King Arthur's court, the deepest disgrace that can befall him. It was from the court of King Artus that knights set out in search of adventures, such as rescuing distressed damsels, humbling oppressors, conquering giants and dwarves, and disenchanting enchanted persons. One of the chief scenes of the wonders of the legend is the wood of Brezilian (Celtic Broch-allean, the wood of Solitude), which to this day bears this name in the province of Bretagne.

The original Welsh legends about King Arthur,

which first came to light a few years ago, being, perhaps, extracts from some earlier legends, are nothing better than a mass of adventures without aim or reason, full of trivialities, and, with much affectation of mystery and importance, told in the driest style possible; at one time the story is overloaded with unsuitable ornament; at another it is naked and bald. Yet, notwithstanding these defects, the British legends found great favour in the twelfth century with the French, who, it must be remembered, had next to no national Epos of their own. In their hands, the rude form of the originals would seem to have received a more attractive guise. The chief use they made of them was as a vehicle to represent their ideal of courtly chivalry; which, in the twelfth century, had arrived at the zenith of its magnificence. It was early in the twelfth century that the Saga of Artus reached Germany through France. Several epics of various merit were constructed upon it as a basis. A comparison of these with each other is particularly instructive. First, we have works in which the inmost depths of human life are mirrored forth in a wonderful manner; then others so exquisite in description that, as Gervinus remarks, the reader quite forgets the insipidity of the story; after this, others which aim at artistic narrative, but miss their mark; and so on till we arrive at works so stiff and stupid, as to be unworthy of criticism. The most prominent personages in the legend are Parcival (as he is called in the French and German, but in the Welsh, Peredur), Lohengrin, Tristan, Iwein, Erec, Gawain, Wigalois, Wigamur, Gauriel, and Lancelot.



The above two legends, then, that of the *Gral*, and *King Arthur*, are combined with each other in three German poems : “*Parcival*,” “*Titurel*,” and “*Lohengrin*.” In each of these, however, the *Gral* is the main topic, Arthur being introduced episodically. Before giving a more detailed account of the *Parcival*, a few words upon the author. Wolfram von Eschenbach was born at the small town of that name near Ansbach, where his monument was still to be seen in the fifteenth century. Descended from a poor, but knightly family, he was one of that circle of poets who, at the end of the twelfth, and for the first fourteen years of the thirteenth century, mustered at the brilliant court of Hermann, the munificent Landgrave of Thuringia. An anticipation this of a similar spectacle which was witnessed at the court of the same country six hundred years later. Wolfram composed some of his poems at the Wartburg, near Eisenach.\* But, as he himself informs us, he did not take up his permanent abode there ; being sometimes engaged elsewhere in the service of Count Wertheim, who was his feudal lord. He must not be confounded with the herd of strolling knights and minstrels who frequented the Thuringian court. In fact, in the “*Parcival*,” he reprehends such trespassers on the landgrave’s hospitality. Not one of his poems is dedicated to a prince ; though his “*Parcival*” is inscribed to a noble lady, the object of his passion. Her name, however, in conformity with the courtly

\* The “*Parcival*” about the year 1204, the “*Willehalm*” about 1215 and 1216.

spirit of the age, is left unmentioned. History has left us no further particulars concerning Wolfram; even the year of his death is unknown.

Wolfram, in this epic of "Parcival," describes the weal and woe of the inner man; the soul and her aspirations; the conflict between the world and the spirit, between pride and humility. In this respect it resembles Goethe's "Faust." The first may be called a psychological epic, the latter a psychological drama.

The legend, then, of the "British Peredur," or "French Parcival," may be regarded as a skeleton, which Wolfram transformed into a creature of flesh and blood and muscle, full of life and soul and motion. In his hands the fable of "Arthur" becomes a type of worldly life, joyous, contented, splendid; while the Saga of the "Gral" represents a higher existence, spiritual and eternal.

Parcival, placed as he is between world and spirit, time and eternity, is the seeking erring man, devoted to this world, denying God, proud and defiant. Then he is the converted man, overcoming pride by humility, inquiring for the spiritual and eternal, and at last attaining to happiness and the possession of the spiritual kingdom.

The following is a sketch of the plot:—

Parcival's father was Gamuret, of the blood royal of Anjou. His mother was Herzeloide, descended from the royal line, which had the custody of the sacred Gral. His father dying young, Parcival was brought up by his mother like an anchorite, in the solitary desert of Soltane, adjoining the forest of Brezilian.

For she feared that, like his father, the love of adventure might lead him into danger, and, like his father, he would perish prematurely. In childish sport the lad carves a bow and arrow, with which he shoots the song-birds of the forest. But presently he bursts into tears to think that their song has ceased, and he is the cause of it. Ever after this he lies under the trees and listens to the birds as they sweetly warble. His little heart is full, and he runs weeping to his mother. The mother would slay the birds that make him sad, but he begs for their life, and she gives her son a kiss. "Shall I disturb the feathered warblers' peace—the peace and joy that God to them has given?" "Oh! what is God?" inquires the boy. His mother answers, "Brighter is God than e'en the brightest day; yet once he took the form and face of man. In trouble pray to him, for he is true. Not so the fiend, the faithless Lord of Hell. Of him beware; beware of wavering doubt." The lad devotes himself to hunting, and waxes into manhood; when one day, on a lonely path through the forest, he discovers the print of horses' hoofs. "Can that be the devil," thinks he, "that my mother is so fearful of." At this moment three stately knights, armed cap-à-pié, and superbly mounted, advance towards him. In an instant all the grandeur of the distant world is revealed to the youth's inward eye. He thinks that each of the knights must be a God. Nothing now will stop him. He must out of the verdant solitudes around him;—out of his mother's arms, into the gay world of chivalry; there to fight battles and win glory;—out to king Artus' court,

the flower and pink of knighthood. His mother, who cannot repress his new-born spirit for travel and adventure, has him a dress made ; but such a dress ! It is not that of a knight-errant, but of a fool. Sackcloth and calfskin are its materials. And so he rides away ; torn by conflicting emotions ; the irresistible longing to roam ; and regret at leaving home : a condition of mind which is strikingly expressed by the old German word "tumb." This state of uncertainty and inexperience pervades all our hero's career. It is the usual antagonism between thought and action ; between the world within, still, reflecting, and innocent, and the world without, all glitter, and grandeur, and confusion. The son's departure breaks his mother's heart. She kisses him and follows his footsteps. But when his form disappears from her view she sinks to the ground and her eyes close for ever.

Parcival arrives at the court of Artus, which happened then to be at Nantes. His grotesque appearance makes a general sensation. A princess who had never laughed in her life laughs at the sight of him. This is an incident, by the bye, of not unfrequent occurrence in compositions of this class. His valour, though rude and undisciplined, is also the theme of universal remark. Subsequently, he takes lessons from an aged knight in all the rules and practice of chivalry. Parcival's simplicity, and the characteristic method in which old Gurnamanz conveys his instruction, are among the best parts of the poem.

His first notable exploit is the deliverance of Queen Konduiramur from her insolent suitors ; after which he

becomes her husband, but soon sets out again to see his mother, of whose death he is unaware. On his journey, he comes one evening to a lake, where he inquires of the fishermen for some place of entertainment. One of them, in rich apparel, but of sad aspect, directs him to a castle where he promises him good entertainment. On reaching the castle he gains admittance by mentioning who had sent him thither. A dazzling sight meets his astonished gaze within. In a spacious saloon hung with a hundred lustres, four hundred knights are seen sitting on a hundred couches. Fires of aloe wood cast their aromatic odours around. A door like polished steel opens, and four princesses clad in dark scarlet enter with golden lamps. After these follow eight noble virgins clad in green velvet, bearing a transparent plateau of garnet. Six others succeed, carrying silver vessels; and after them yet another six, who attend upon the fairest of the fair, the virgin queen, Repanse de joie. The latter bears a vessel of marvellously brilliant pebble, which she places before the king. But in the midst of all this magnificence there is a source of deep affliction. The king himself sits muffled in furs, sad, and suffering from severe wounds. The entrance of an attendant with a lance dripping with blood is the signal for universal lamentation. Parcival sits beside the king, and, through the open door, perceives in an adjoining apartment a very aged man with snow white hair, stretched upon a bed. He has arrived at the castle of the Gral, and yet he knows it not;—knows not that he has arrived at the place of highest bliss, and also of deepest suffering, which he

alone can alleviate;—knows not that the Gral stands before him;—knows not that the hoary patriarch is his own ancestor, Titurel, king of the Gral; that the sick king is his own uncle, Anfortas, and the queen his aunt. He cares nought, and asks nought about all this, although the king gives him a sword and points to his wounds. He partakes of a costly supper, and sleeps in a costly bed. Next morning, when he awakes, he finds his clothes and sword by his bedside, and his horse standing ready saddled without; but there is not a soul to be seen throughout the deserted halls of the castle. As he rides away, a squire hails him from the building, in derisive tones, for not asking about what he had seen. Directly afterwards he meets with a young girl weeping over the corpse of her lover. He has seen her once before; but although she is unknown to him she is in reality his foster sister Sigune, the bride of Tschionatulander. From her he learns what an error he has been guilty of in not “inquiring after” the happiness that was so near him. She curses him for showing no commiseration for Anfortas, and with this leaves him.

Parcival rides onward sunk in a deep reverie, when three drops of blood falling on the snow recall to his mind his wife Conduiramur; how a tear stood in each eye and one upon her chin when he deserted her. A dream of home comes over him, and he longs to see her again once more. But many years must elapse previously; and then he will find his wife and twin-sons on this very spot. And so these ruddy drops, while they remind him of the past, are also an augury of



the future. "Thus we again recognise dreams and thoughts of our childhood, when they come across us in after years. Or like an aged man, as he beholds the rising sun, bethinks him that once, when he was a child and sitting on a bank, he saw it rise just in this manner, and that he has never seen it rise so since. He knows that it shone so before he was born, and thinks how it will soon shine upon his grave."\* This incident of the blood-drops in the snow is not new. It is to be found in the oldest Celtic and German Sagas; and reappears in the fairy tales "Sneewitch" and "Machandelbaum."

The knights, who have been despatched by King Artus, cannot wake Parcival out of his reverie till they cover up these blood-drops. King Artus offers to take him into his Table-round, but the witch Kundrie, the messenger of the Gral curses him, so he bids farewell to all thoughts of worldly adventures, dedicates himself to the service of the Gral, and departs, disquieted within himself and doubting God.

Four years he wanders in distraction and doubt. During this period he is entirely lost sight of, and we have before us a different scene. We see secular chivalry in all its gorgeousness, with Gawein for its hero; who, like Parcival, ultimately goes in quest of the Gral.

At length, one Good Friday, Parcival reappears. A cavalier in a grey mantle meets him and bids him simply and solemnly reflect on the higher end of his existence, and on that God to whom he has been faithless.

\* Grimm, "Altdeutsche Wälder," i. 5.

Under his guidance Parcival arrives at a hermit's, whom he finds is his uncle Trevrizent. From him he learns that pride and doubt will never win the sacred vessel. Anfortas, the king of the Gral, once went to battle with the cry of "Amur;" but worldly love was unsuited for his high vocation, and therefore it was that he had been wounded by the poisoned spear which Parcival had seen. From an inscription on the Gral it is known that his torments will never end till a knight comes and inquires about the vessel and about the sufferings of the king. To this knight, Anfortas will resign the kingdom, and it is no other than Parcival, his nephew.

We next encounter Gawein, the worldly cavalier, disenchanting the Château Merveil, which has been placed under a spell by that infamous magician, Klingsohr,—Klingsohr, who afterwards appears as an historical personage, and who had the famous contest in singing with Wolfram himself on the Wartburg. Meantime Parcival passes by the castle, and, although fully aware what a grand field for achieving worldly honour lies here before him, he passes onward unconcerned upon his new path. So that the knights in front of the castle can scarcely believe their eyes, that it is Parcival himself who has thus passed by. Subsequently Parcival fights and conquers the worldly champion, Gawein, without intending it. This shows that thoughts must rise into actions; that the spiritual power must, if necessary, be able to measure itself against the temporal. Subsequently he fights for Gawein, and is admitted into the Table-round. But he speedily leaves the walks of

secular chivalry to fulfil the task that is imposed upon him. He meets and vanquishes the leader of a band of heathens, whom he discovers to be Feirefiz, his half-brother. He has long been purified inwardly; by the last act his outward purification is also accomplished. The messenger of the Gral, who once cursed him, announces to him that he is destined to be the King of the Gral; and he sets off for the temple. He releases his uncle from his sufferings by asking after the cause of them; succeeds to the kingdom of the Gral; finds his wife and two children, the younger of whom, Kardeis, is crowned king of his worldly dominions. The elder, Lohengrin, is destined to succeed his father. It is now made a rule that from henceforward, whenever a knight is sent out on a mission by the Gral, he must permit no questions to be asked about his descent. Lohengrin's wife, the young Duchess of Brabant, in spite of warning, persists in questioning her husband upon the forbidden topic; on which, he leaves her for ever, and is conveyed back to the Gral in a skiff drawn by a swan, an incident familiar to the student of the old German Sagas. And so ends the poem; which, in order fully to be appreciated, must be read over and over again. Wolfram himself jokingly mentions the crabbedness of his German. Others called him "an inventor of strange wild stories;" but, notwithstanding this, the "Parci-val" continued for many centuries to be regarded as the masterpiece of chivalresque poetry; and this even though his language must have become perfectly unintelligible after two centuries. Upon the invention of printing it was one of the first books that appeared

from the press. This was as early as 1477. In 1784 an edition came out by Müller, the editor of the "Nibelungenlied." Besides this, we have an excellent critical edition of all Wolfram's works by Lachmann. Two translations have also appeared very lately, one by San-Marte (Schulz), which, though readable, is at times faulty. It also contains an analysis of "Wilhelm von Oranse," and the "Younger Titurel," as well as some researches into the Sagas of the "Gral" and "Artus." Simrock's translation is upon the whole satisfactory.

Wolfram also commenced a history in verse of Titurel, the old Gral-king; or rather of Tschionatulander and Sigune, their first love, adventures, and miserable end. The poem is written in strophes of seven lines each; but is in an unfinished and fragmentary state. In point of form it is among the most finished specimens of court-poetry of the thirteenth century still extant.\*

About the year 1270 one Albrecht von Scharfenberg wrote a poem upon Titurel, which he passed off in Wolfram's name; and which, although a very second-rate affair, was for a long time held to be genuine. It was called the "Younger Titurel," in contradistinction to the fragment of the genuine "Titurel" by Wolfram.

Lohengrin, the third poem of the series, was also attributed to Wolfram, but without any foundation. It is written in the Meistersänger strophe, the so-called

\* The fragments of "Titurel," written by Wolfram, were first made known by Docen, 1810. They are in Lachmann's edition of "Wolfram von Eschenbach," 1833. The only edition of the "Younger Titurel," which exists in a good many MSS., is that of Hahn, "Der Jüngere Titurel," 1842.

black strain (schwarze Ton) of Klingsohr, and describes the exploits and fortunes of Lohengrin, the son of Parcival, which are jumbled up with the true history after a strange and clumsy fashion. The poem opens with the musical contest on the Wartburg. It then accompanies our hero, who is married to the Duchess of Brabant, to the wars, some of which are purely fabulous, others historical; and concludes with his separation from the Duchess, in consequence of her indiscreet inquiries about his birth and lineage.\* Some of the similes in this piece are good; the descriptions of manners are also faithful. Here, as elsewhere (*e. g.*, in Grimm's fairy tales), we meet with that strange mythical fancy, representing great heroic families as sprung from the depths of the sea. The embodiment of this idea is a mysterious swan, which appears from time to time in the story. This saga was current among the Angles and Danes, no less than among the Franks and Guelphs. It became mixed up with the legends of Charlemagne and the Grail, and even with those of the Roman invasion. It reappears in the story of Saint Genoveva; and lingers on still, according to the very probable supposition of J. Grimm, in the fable of "The Blind Hessian."

We shall now advert to Gottfried von Strasburg's poem of "Tristan and Isolde."

In the whole range of German literature no other instance occurs of two contemporary authors so entirely

\* "Lohengrin," ed. Görres, 1813. The text is not critically treated, but the preface, mentioned in note at page 119 above, is worthy of perusal.

† J. Grimm's "Deutsche Mythologie," second edition, pp. 343, 346. Comp. H. Leo über Beowulf, 1839, p. 18.

diverse as Wolfram and Gottfried. It is a diversity not only of subject-matter and form, but likewise of language and of ideas. And first, for the subject-matter. One feature indeed is common to them both. They both worked upon French versions of old British legends. These Celtic legends, as we remarked previously, abounded with a heap of adventures thrown together without the least connection. But they had another peculiarity. They were often exceedingly immoral. They set at nought laws human and divine without the least compunction. Possibly French frivolity made bad worse, and some of the obscenity is due to the translators; but the germs of this immorality subsisted already in the Celtic originals.

One of these stories, which in its utter contempt for the marriage-tie may compete with the most abandoned productions of the modern French school, was selected by Gottfried as the subject of his poem, "Tristan and Isolt." Out of the dull materials before him he has created a picture full of life and spirit, and that spirit his own—a psychological picture so true and profound as to surpass anything of the kind that was ever produced. His theme is love; of the earth, earthy; all-consuming, devouring love; love bent on enjoyment, and blind to everything besides. The dictates of conscience, the calls of duty, are put entirely out of sight. Nothing interferes with the sweet delusion. Woman is depicted, dissolved in engrossing passion, fanning the unholy flame with all her might. The man, on the other hand, abandons himself heart and soul to her bewitching spells, till the mind is so utterly enervated and unstrung



that he cannot even be constant to the object of his affections. All this is painted with much truth and force, and at the same time with surpassing liveliness and naïveté.

Here is none of the sombre earnestness of Wolfram. The words and the metre are admirably adapted to the subject; clear and bright, smooth and flowing. There are no heavy and uninteresting episodes of knights and knightly games to interrupt the smiling tenor of the love-story. The lovers, and they alone, are before us. All is sprightly, and gay, and graceful. At times the tale rises into the lyrical, both in tone and measure; or rather we may pronounce it to be Minne poetry, in all its careless luxuriance, all its alluring charms, thrown into the dress of narrative. .

From what has been said it will be at once apparent what a striking contrast was exhibited between Wolfram and Gottfried. Indeed it was Gottfried who slightly called Wolfram "an inventor of strange, wild stories." A man of the world like he was would necessarily feel no sympathy for the holy earnestness, the staid dignity, of his contemporary. This was quite beyond him, quite out of his line. To swim with the stream, or rather in front of it, to point the way to pleasure and gratification, such was his vocation; while Wolfram, with warning voice, strives to stem the torrent of worldly fashion. It is not impossible that the high ground taken by Wolfram, his claim to be a censor and instructor of the age, raised a spirit of opposition in Gottfried, and first struck from him the poetic spark which blazes forth in "Tristan and Isolt."

Here, in this thirteenth century, which was so thoroughly penetrated with the spirit of Christianity, we perceive the first germ of that antagonism to a Christian life and practice which was afterwards so conspicuous. Gottfried's "Tristan" gave the first impulse to that new movement, although the poet himself owed his inspiration primarily to the shock which Christianity had given to the age in which he lived. He may be considered as the forerunner of that appetite for worldly and physical enjoyment, for material advantage and possession, which in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries caused Europe to degenerate into mere animalism, hypocrisy, and disbelief.

Gottfried left his work unfinished. His modern admirers are of opinion that, if he had completed it, he would have wound up with a wholesome moral, showing how subversive the indulgence in carnal appetites is to the true spirit of chivalry. The poem itself contains no indications of such intention.

Ulrich von Türheim and Heinrich von Freiburg both wrote continuations of "Tristan." The first is very brief. The latter, though written with more skill and ornateness, is much inferior to the model.\* At the same time it must be mentioned that Gottfried's was not the first German version of "Tristan." In the twelfth

\* Gottfried's "Tristan" appeared first in vol. ii. of Müller's Collection, 1784, with the continuation of "Heinrich von Freiburg," a bad and useless edition. Later it was edited by Eberhard v. Groote, 1821, with Ulrich von Türheim's continuation; by Hagen, 1823, with both continuations, and a glossary; and, lastly, in 1843, by Massmann. Gottfried,—who is always called Meister, not Herr,—must have been of burgher rank, but a man of learning, and have written "Tristan" about 1210.

century, one Eilhart von Oberg wrote what was apparently nothing more than a translation from the French, with none of Gottfried's brilliancy. This version was afterwards much altered and converted into a prose work, which was a good deal read till late in the sixteenth century.\* Another German version is that of Immermann; the last that by H. Kurtz. No poet of the thirteenth century was so much imitated by his own and the succeeding generations as Gottfried. There are several Minne songs written in his honour. Rudolf von Ems, and other writers of art-epics, designate him as their model. The other poems upon the Artus-saga, though differing from each other in merit, constituted a distinct class when compared with the works of Wolfram and Gottfried. They adhere to the subject-matter as they find it in the French translations. There is no prevailing idea in them, which, as in the case of "Tristan" and "Parcival," animates the whole, and renders it superior to the original. Their excellence consists in lopping off superfluities, in skilfully connecting adventures together which it seemed difficult to connect, in giving a lively and pleasing story, closely following the original, and in putting the quaint-looking figures into a German dress.

Hartmann von der Aue stands pre-eminent in these

\* Eilhart von Oberg was born in the province of Hildesheim, and lived between 1189 and 1207. The few extant fragments of his original work are in Hoffmann's "Fundgruben," i. 231. A later poetical version exists only in MSS. (Pfälzer Hs. 346, and at Dresden). The prose romance appeared first in 1484, then in 1498, and often. It was printed in Feyerabend's "Buch der Liebe," 1587, and from thence in Büsching and Hagen's "Buch der Liebe," 1809.

respects. His "Erec" and "Iwein" are upon the Artus-saga. The former, also called "Erec and Enite," is a youthful composition. It was written about 1290. In it the stiffness of the old Celtic stories is not entirely overcome.\* His marvellous powers as a story-teller are first unfolded in "Iwein," the Knight with the Lion, written about ten years later. His style is particularly easy and natural, and suits itself exactly to the matter in hand, whether it be earnest harangue, merry joke, or rapid conversation. Nothing can be done better. Indeed, his skill as a narrator is so exquisite that, even where the plot is dull and uninteresting, we go on reading merely for the description's sake. The true-hearted motto with which the poem opens and closes, "Swere an rehte güete wendet sîn gemüete dem volget saelde unde êre :"—

"Who to real goodness turneth his mind,  
He shall have honour and fortune combined :"—

proves the writer to have been an honest, upright, and well-meaning man. And it is the exercise of the social virtues that he seeks to place prominently forward in the character of his hero. Iwein is the copy of the

\* "Erec and Enite" was discovered in 1821, last among the works of Hartmann, and it was edited by Haupt in 1839. Erec, son of King Lac, after obtaining the fair Enite to wife, omits, in her embraces, all knightly exercises. This draws upon him universal contempt, the reason of which is disclosed to him by Enite. His love for her at once turns to rancorous hate, and he commands her to follow him on his travels in search of adventure, though she is not to speak a word to him. Then follow a number of terrible trials, not only for Erec, who deserved it, but for the innocent Enite. There is a foreign tone about the matter of this poem which is not agreeable.

moderate people of the age—those, in short, who were not strong enough to live up to the lofty pattern of *Parcival*—not weak enough to approve of *Tristan*. How much the fable has gained from the art of the narrator will become at once apparent by comparing this work with the Welsh original, edited by Lady Guest, under the title of the “*Lady at the Fountain*,” and with Chretien of Troyes’ “*Chevalier au Lion*.” “*Parcival*” has also been edited by the same lady, as well as “*Erec*,” under the title of “*Geraint, son of Erbin*.” There is an excellent German edition of “*Iwein*,” by Lachmann and Benecke, to which are appended explanatory notes, and a first-rate glossary by Benecke.\* All the other poems upon the Artus-saga are poor imitations of Hartmann. “*Wigalois, or the Knight with the Wheel*,” was written about 1212, by a young knight, Wirnt von Grafenberg. Here and there he copies Gottfried. It is clumsily done.† Ulrich von Zazichoven’s “*Lanzelot vom See*” is of about the same date (not 1192). It is weak and unconnected, and retains the obscurity of the original.‡ Heinrich

\* The first edition of “*Iwein*,” by Benecke and Lachmann, appeared in 1827, a second in 1843; a translation and explanation, by Count Baudissen, in 1845. The Welsh romances, edited by Lady Guest, are entitled “*The Mabinogion from the Llyfr coch o Hergest*,” Llandovery, 1838–1840; a translation into German, with a good preface on the Arthur-saga, “*Die Arthur-sage und die Märchen des rothen Buchs von Hergest*,” was published by San Marte (A. Schulz) in 1842. These Celtic remains are unfortunately more interesting in a learned than poetic point of view.

† “*Wigalois der Ritter mit dem Rade von Wirnt von Gravenberch*,” edited by Benecke, 1819, with notes and glossary. A new edition, with critical notes, was published by F. Pfeiffer, 1847; a translation, by Count Baudissen (Guy von Wales), 1847.

‡ “*Lanzelot. Eine Erzählung von Ulrich von Zatzikhoven*,” von

von dem Türlin's "Aventiure Krone," written about 1220, describes Arthur and his knights.\* It is a poor affair. Poorer still are "Wigamur, or der Ritter mit dem Adler,"† and "Gabriel von Muntavel, or der Ritter mit dem Bock,"‡ both dating from the middle of the thirteenth century, or a little later.

Reviewing the above works in order of time, we obtain the following result. First, in Eilhart's "Tristan," we have a faithful but rude imitation of the Welsh original. Then come Hartmann's "Erec" and "Iwein," which, though ornate, never rise to the dignity of original ideas. Then follow the poems of Wolfram and Gottfried, abounding with thought and original genius. The summit is here reached. In the succeeding poets a decline is at once visible. They either adhere slavishly to the originals, like Ulrich, or indolently copy Hartmann, *e. g.* Wirnt, Heinrich Türlin,

Hahn, 1845. The editor tries to defend the writer against the attacks of Gervinus, but this "Wipsallige Lanzelet" is a sorry personage. Ulrich's description is naked, and has no soul in it.

\* It was edited, 1852, by Scholl, in the "Bibliothek des Lit. Vereins zu Stuttgart." Parts were published before, *e. g.* a panegyric on the deceased poets Hartmann, Reinmar, &c., in Haupt's "Die Lieder und Büchlein und der arme Heinrich von Hartmann," 1842, p. xii. (previously in Hagen's "Minnesänger," iv. 263); also "Die sage vom Zauberbecher," by Hahn, in "F. Wolf über die Lais Sequenzen und Leiche," 1841, p. 378, *sqq.*

† "Wigamur" was composed by an unknown poet, edited by Hagen and Büsching, 1811, in their "Dichtungen des Mittel-alters."

‡ "Gabriel von Muntavel" von Kunhart von Stoffel is still unprinted. A fragment is given in "Wackernagel alt-d. Leseb.," second edition, i. p. 643. Connected with the Artus poetry is likewise "Daniel von Blumenthal," by the Stricker, and "Gawein," by an unknown poet. Walwan, and other heroes of the Artus group, probably had special poems in their honour.



and the author of "Wigamur" and "Gabriel," who is said to have been one Master Kunhart von Stoffel. In the educated world of the succeeding centuries this Artus poetry, notwithstanding its defects, continued to be held in high estimation. Nay, the poorest specimens often stood in the highest favour with the reading public. As a proof of the veneration in which the knights of the round-table were held, it may be recorded that so late as the sixteenth century the nobility of South Germany often christened their children by the names of Parceval, Wigamur, and Wigalois.

We shall now pass on to the fourth group, viz., poems upon antique characters and antique Sagas; *e. g.* the "History of the Trojan war," the tale of "Æneas," the legend of "Alexander the Great." These occupy the long interval from about 1170 to the end of the thirteenth century.

The most noteworthy feature of all these pieces is that everything appears in a thoroughly German dress. Hector is not a Trojan hero, nor Achilles a Greek, nor Turnus an Italian. They all speak like German warriors of the age of chivalry.

In like manner, Alexander is not the Alexander of history, but a German king.

Besides which, the legends of Troy, with the exception of the history of Æneas, did not come from their poetical source, Homer; for Homer was quite unknown to the West till the fifteenth century. They were derived from much later and obscurer sources, viz., Dares and Dictys. "Alexander" was based not upon

history, but upon the Saga, which was a mixture of Oriental, Persian, Jewish, and Christian elements. No doubt, at first sight, these poems look very surprising. In the same way, that fault has been found with Schiller's "Wallenstein," because everything about it bears the air of the eighteenth century, and not of the period of the thirty years' war. Indeed it would be only necessary to substitute German names for those of Æneas, Turnus, and Lavinia, to have a thorough German romance. They are Gawain and Erec over again. It is a striking proof of the force of German genius in those days that some, though not all, of these pieces, notwithstanding the strange transmutation that has been effected in them, do not look in the least like travesties; neither do the incongruities strike us disagreeably.

The Saga of "Alexander the Great" was elaborated by several writers; *e.g.*, by Ulrich von Eschenbach\* (no relation of Wolfram's), and by Rudolf von Ems;† but the version bearing the name of one Priest Lamprecht, and dating from the twelfth century, is unquestionably far the best. Perhaps after all, this name, which is mentioned at the beginning of the poem, is the name of the author of the French version, Clerc Lambert; in

\* The "Alexandreis" of U. v. Eschenbach was composed between 1248 and 1284, and is still unprinted, see "Weckherlin Beiträge," 1-32. A story out of it, due to another hand, "Alexander und Zwerg Antiloye," is given in "Wackernagel die Handschriften der Bas. Univ. Bibl." 1836, p. 27.

† Rudolf von Ems' "Alexandreis" was probably written between 1238 and 1241. All that has been printed of it is a passage, of literary interest, in Hagen's "Minnesänger," iv. 865.

which case the name of the author of the German version is unknown. Be this as it may, the writer must have been an ecclesiastic, as is plain from the contents of the poem, and particularly from the end.

The legend of Alexander, the mighty world-conqueror, who first opened the East to Western enterprise, had long been current in both quarters of the globe. The echo of his destroying footsteps was heard in Persian story, and caught up, at an early period, in the poetical romances of the West. The work of Curtius Rufus must have been, in fact, little better than a romance; but it was not till the mediæval times, which, in the migrations of the nations, and afterwards in the Crusades, bore some resemblance to the age of Alexander, that the Saga reached its full development.

All the experiences of the Crusaders, both in fact and imagination,—lands teeming with wonders, expeditions full of monstrous adventures, Paradise itself regained on earth,—all this was transferred by Italians and Frenchmen to Alexander the Great, and from those countries the infection spread to Germany. The poem of one Aubrey of Besançon (in German “Alberich von Bisenzûn”), of which, as yet, we have no very accurate knowledge, must have been the chief work on the subject. It is quoted both by French and German writers of the Alexandriner-legend, and also by the author of the work before us, who lived in the twelfth century.

This is written in imperfectly rhymed couplets; the language is Middle-Low-German, with a tinge of High-German about it. The style has little flexibility; is

often abrupt and dry: still there is much in it that savours of the old popular poetry. Here and there its tone reminds us even of the alliterative poetry of the "Hildebrands-lied," and "Beowulf," qualities which the author could not have borrowed from his foreign original, but which must have been due to his own talents. Thus it is related of Alexander, that in his earlier years he showed his strength and courage, "and when anything disliked him, he looked just like a wolf does, when he stands over his prey;" and in one of the battles with the Persians, "Alexander fights with the fierceness of an angry bear, when attacked by the hounds." Indeed, there is somewhat of the old heroic type discernible in all the numerous battles that occur. In a duel (Einwig) between Alexander and Porus, the combatants draw their swords, and spring upon each other with the ferocity of forest boars. Jealousy (*i. e.* desire for the mastery) is between them; loud is the clang of steel; fire shoots from the shield-rims; again and again they dash to the fray; sword cut and sword thrust strike harness and helm; and now the combat becomes general; the green meadows redden with the blood of the slain; it fills the furrows, it rolls over into the depths below. But another side of the Alexander legend is here exhibited. In a supposed letter to Aristotle,—a literary production, which, in the middle ages, existed in almost every European language,—Alexander describes the wonders which he encounters. This is very felicitously done. The style is simple and popular, and hence an interest attaches to the poem, which later and more elaborate descriptions of the same topics can-

not boast of. Thus, Alexander comes with his forces into a dark wood, the lofty trees of which intertwine their branches so as to exclude the sun's rays. Fresh limpid rivulets run from the wood down into the valley. Sweet song of birds sounds through the foliage, and is re-echoed from the wooded shade. The ground is covered with an incalculable multitude of unopened flowers of marvellous size. The blossoms, which look like great globes, are tinted with rose-colour and snow-white; suddenly they open, and from each perfumed chalice issues a maiden of wondrous beauty. The thousand little lovely creatures then raise a melodious strain vying with the song of the birds; and thus they float, singing and dancing in the cool shade of the forest. The children of the green shade and noiseless solitude are pink and white, like the flowers whence they spring. But the sun's scorching ray falls upon them, they fade and die; like the flowers which May calls into life, and Autumn to death.

“Faded all the flowers,  
All the maidens dead,  
Leafless all the bowers,  
All the joys have fled.  
Birds have ceased their singing,  
Founts no longer flow,”

*etc.*

But with all these pretty descriptions there is also no lack of grand and solemn thoughts. “All is vanity, and the greatest earthly grandeur must come to nought; so sang Alberich,” says the poet, “in the spirit of Solomon, and so sing I.” Alexander conquered the world, he possessed all the wealth of Ind, and then he

arrived at Paradise, and thought to take it by storm also. But it is not by force of arms, not by passion, that Paradise is to be won; he only is worthy of it who conquers himself. And so the conqueror of the world must perforce turn back at the very threshold. Henceforth he lived a life of moderation, left off war, flung away ambition, and at last there remained to him

Of this earth but seven feet long,  
Just like to the poorest man.\*

This incident of Alexander being turned back at the very gates of Paradise because he lacked humility, is repeated in all the later Alexander Sagas; indeed it still lived in the memory of poets, and even of the people, as late as the seventeenth century, when all that was old and good disappeared. Gervinus gives a most exaggerated estimate of the value of this poem. At the same time it must be confessed that Lamprecht's "Alexander," and the "Rolandslied," are the very best works of the age now under consideration, and that they surpass everything in the same walk of later times.

The only version of the tale of "Æneas" is that by Heinrich von Veldekin, the Father of Middle-High-German poetry. As his name indicates, he was a native of Lower Germany. The date of the composition is between 1184 and 1188. As he cannot have had

\* Lamprecht's "Alexander" has been edited by Massmann twice; first in 1828, in "Denkmäler," pp. 16-75; then, 1837, in his "Gedichte des 12 Jahrh." i. p. 64. A comprehensive edition of it, by H. Weismann, appeared in 1850, "Alexander Gedicht des 12 Jahrh., &c. Urtext und Uebersetzung," &c., 2 vols. This lengthy work has not done much for the furtherance of the Alexander literature.



access to the original—indeed, if he had, he would hardly have been able to read it—he must have worked after a foreign model. In this work, in which he clothes Latin poetry in a German dress, he presents a pattern of writing, such as remained exclusively in fashion for more than 200 years; rising in Wolfram and Gottfried to its highest pitch, as the poetry of thought and feeling: while in Konrad von Würzburg, who lived eighty years later, it becomes the *ne plus ultra* of elegant versification. Afterwards it gradually sunk; until, in the time of the Reformation, this sort of writing became extinct.

Veldekin was also a frequenter of the Thuringian court on the Wartburg, of which he was the heart and soul. From this point, as a centre, his influence as a writer of court-romances and lyric tales of chivalry spread with astonishing rapidity throughout Germany, the South part of it especially. Ornateness of style, smoothness and finish of delineation, purity of language, accurate versification, regularity and harmoniousness of rhyme, such are his characteristics. And though he cannot be called the inventor of all this, for it was actually lying ready to hand, although people did not know it, yet he was the first to give it expression and utterance. Just in the same way that Opitz, 400 years later—who, though no poetic genius any more than was Veldekin, was a man of talent—had the power of saying cleverly the right thing at the right moment, and thus of striking the chord of popular sympathy. Kind feeling and naïveté are the distinctive features of Veldekin's "Eneit." It eschews great characters.

The modicum of the solid, the grand, the heroic, that Virgil had retained in the “Æneid,” has evaporated. Popular traits are seldom, if ever, to be found.\*

The versions of the Trojan war may be briefly mentioned. Numbers of them are still extant: one of these is by Herbort, a Hessian, born at Fritzlar; it is entitled “Liet von Troje,” and was written early in the thirteenth century. He also found a patron in the Landgrave Hermann, who helped him to procure the original from which he copied. Much of the old stiffness, which the higher class of poets had got rid of, still clings to his composition. But, on the other hand, he has still much of that popular air which tip-top art-poetry had managed to polish utterly away. The language, versification, and rhyme, are such as would not have passed muster with the fastidious court poets. In fact, the stamp of the Lower-Hessian dialect is unmistakeably impressed upon the poem; a dialect hovering between High- and Low-German.†

Konrad von Wurzburg, who died at Basel in 1287, is a poet of a totally different sort. Elegance of language, harmony of versification, copiousness of diction, point him out as an imitator of Gottfried von Strassburg: and in him they reach perfection. But tropes, phrases, and figures are often made to compensate for qualities of a more substantial kind. We shall have occasion to revert to him hereafter. His “Trojan War,” which is unfinished, and is his last production, is

\* Veldekin’s “Eneit” was printed in Müller’s collection, 1784. (Ettmüller’s is the last and best edition.—*Editor*.)

† “Herbort’s von Fritzlar Lied von Troje,” G. Frommann, 1837.

by no means his best. More than double the length of "Parcival," which is 30,000 lines long, it of course contains much that is superfluous. But what stamps it as the work of a transition period is the exaggeration of the descriptions. At one time these are overloaded with ornament, at another they sink into coarseness and common-place.\*

The external form of poetry reached its highest perfection at the time when Konrad wrote, *i. e.* between 1240 and 1300. Rhyme, verse, diction, all the technical part of the art, was as high as it could be. But the soul of poetry was wanting. The grand and the genuine is succeeded by what is bastard and trivial. Empty phraseology, and spiritless imitation, replace feeling and originality. The colouring is glaring and extravagant. In place of choosing simple subjects, the poet grasps at the abstract, the learned, the remote: and then, finding that his writings do not take with the public, he complains of being neglected and misunderstood, of the stupidity of the age, of its indifference to poetry in its highest sense. Complaints of this kind are proof positive, were all other wanting, that the poet who utters them lived after 1240, or at least 1250.

We now pass to the fifth and last group, Church legends. The mass of these productions in the twelfth and thirteenth century — not to mention in the fourteenth and fifteenth — is almost without limit.

\* Little more than half of Konrad's "Trojanerkrieg" was printed in the third volume of Müller, which is unfinished and rare. A portion of the second half is printed in Mone's "Anzeiger," 1837, Sp. 267. Konrad himself left the work unfinished.

Nearly all the saints in the calendar had their respective legends; from the Virgin Mary down to Elizabeth of Hungary. In all these poetical legends we must not look for a world of action and heroic enterprise; a world of passion, love, and revenge; for lofty flights and exalted ideas; but for pure and pleasing pictures of tranquil scenes, inspired by faith and devotion. But if it is the essence of poetry to be absorbed in the subject; if real warmth of feeling, unaffectedly expressed, is one of its chief ornaments; if ardent soul-drawn faith in the Invisible and Eternal is the soil that has ever produced poetry's choicest flowers; then these simple pious legends will not fail to be appreciated as they ought. The unadorned simplicity, the purity, the tenderness, the humility of the Virgin Mary; the patient countenances of the martyrs, such as are to be seen in the old breviaries; all this could only have been painted by the hand of one who felt what he was about; who was imbued with the same spirit. Even so it is with these poetic legends. The same spirit of pious faith, reverence, and devotion dictated them. If the popular romances, and the knightly epics of art-poetry represent to us the expeditions and exploits of the Crusaders, Church legendary poetry, in the same way, is the song of the humble pilgrim with his scallop-shell and his staff, bound on his lonely way to Jerusalem, to kneel in prayer at the Holy Sepulchre; afterwards to return to his home, poor as he went, though full of unspeakable comfort. If knightly poetry is the poetry of worldly magnificence, full of merriment, and music, and song, of dance and

festival; the poetry of earthly love for an earthly bride; then the poetry of the Church legends is the poetry of voluntary poverty, of the lonely cell and quiet garden, of the monastery shut in by its lofty walls; it is the poetry of the brides of Heaven, who, without plaint or regret, bid adieu to the world's joys for a life of tranquil devotion.

With the Mother of God they approach the cross, and a sword pierces their side also. With Saint Cæcilia they hear the angels playing; with Holy Theresa they wander through the glades of Paradise. Is Minnepoetry the gentle homage paid to earthly loveliness and grace; then is Church-legendary poetry the homage paid to the Virgin-Mother of God; it is the love of this world refined and spiritualized into a love that is heavenly, and that fadeth not away. For it must be remembered that at this same period, when woman was the object of a worship, such as has never been paid to her before or since, the Virgin was also adored most deeply, simply, and truly.

If we could for a moment imagine to ourselves the child-like poetic faith of those days, before the reverence for the Virgin Mary and the Saints had settled into a regular worship, and undergone that debasement and exaggeration which caused the reaction of the Reformation, then we should be enabled to form a true estimate of the poetry now under consideration. We should see that it was a necessary part of the poetic wreath of the thirteenth century.

Of these legends, all of which are derived from the Apocryphal Gospels, we shall select a few instances.

The twelfth century, the period preceding the one which we are now describing, produced several examples. One of the oldest is a song in honour of the Virgin Mary, composed by Werner, a monk of Tegernsee, in Bavaria, in the year 1173. A part of it is still extant in the author's own handwriting. Somewhat later it was altered in shape, appearing in three parts.\* There is a staid and severe air about this poem which places it in a favourable contrast with many of the later legends. When the Virgin is born "the enmity between God and man is removed. Men are invited to the table of God, to the living bread, which saves the soul in time of need. Man became the associate of angels. Honey and milk flowed out of the earth. God blessed the world, and rained help from Heaven. When God shone upon all, then came the vine; the true turtle-dove was heard everywhere. The day when she was born is blessed by all the folk; who long with God's bride to rise above their sins, and serve under his banner."

"A Litany to all the Saints" is in the same style, and of the same date. There is a good deal of genuine enthusiasm about it, expressed with force and dignity. It begins with an invocation to Christ. "Thou'rt called Wisdom's-fount, the key of compassion, comforter of the poor, lover of pure hearts, way to eternal life, chief-stone of Heaven's stair; thou defendest, thou re-

\* Werner von Tegernsee died 1197. The older fragment is in Docen's "Miscell." ii. 103, and in Hoffmann's "Fundgr." ii. 213. The new version was published 1802 by Oetter, and 1837 by Hoffmann (Fundgr. ii. 145). A specimen of Werner's non-religious poetry occurs below.



deemest, thou burnest and coolest, thou moistenest and parchest, thou shuttest and openest, thou stayest and goest, thou strengthenest and makest afraid, thou freest and preservest, thou quickenest and nourishest, thou lullest to sleep and awakenest, thou hidest and thou makest known; rain down these thy spiritual gifts upon our dry hearts, that we may bring forth rich and eternal fruit." After invoking the Virgin, the Archangels, John the Baptist, and the Apostles, the poem thus proceeds:—"Sweet champion of all God's martyrs, who liftedst the banner first, and borest it away to martyrdom, when thou wert stoned to death; free us, Holy Stephen, from all our troubles; and thou, Saint Laurentius, who wert roasted on the gridiron, come and comfort us. With you will we fight the spiritual fight; with you win the spiritual victory. You carried the cross before us that we should follow in your footsteps."\*

The best known of the legends in honour of the Holy Family is one written by a Carthusian monk, Bruder Philip, in the middle of the thirteenth century. It was copied and re-written numbers of times, and continued to be read till the sixteenth century. Its simple, unpretending, and hearty manner make the best parts of it very interesting.†

\* The "Litanei aller Heiligen," the author of which calls himself Heinrich, in the older version, is printed in the older form from a MS. of the twelfth century in Hoffmann's "Fundgr." ii. 216; in a later form from a Strasburg MS. in Massmann's "Gedichte des 12 Jarh." i. p. 43.

† Brother Philip's "Leben der Heiligen Familie" ("Marienleben") was published by Rückert, Breslau, 1853. The subject-matter and extracts are in Docen's "Miscellaneen," 1807, ii. 66.

“Die Kindheit unseres Herrn,” by Konrad von Fussesbrunnen, written at the beginning of the thirteenth century, is the best poem of the sort. It was long known by name, but it was only lately that the poem itself was discovered and printed.\* Konrad von Würzburg’s “Goldene Schmiede,”—a glorification of the Virgin,—is perhaps the most perfect of his works. Herein he represents himself as a smith, who makes of gold and precious stones the adornment of the Empress of Heaven. “Could I in the smithy of my heart,” he says in the opening, “forge a poem of gold, with luminous thoughts like carbuncles set therein, then would I write a brilliant eulogy in thy honour. But even if my speech could soar aloft, as if borne on eagles’ wings, it never could reach to the level of thy praise. Sooner could marble and precious stones be bored by a straw, or the diamond by soft lead, than I could glorify thee as thou deservest. When the stars have been numbered, and the motes in the sunbeam, and the sand, and the leaves, then, and not till then, will thy praises be meetly sung.” The poet then launches forth into a set of most exalted encomiums of the Virgin-Mother. Many of the images are borrowed from Holy writ; and, in fact, had, before Konrad’s time, been referred to the Virgin by German poetical writers. Such, for instance, as Aaron’s rod and Gideon’s fleece. So that Konrad’s merit does not consist so much in originality, as in putting these figures into a brilliant and highly poetical form. A collection of these figures from Konrad and others has

\* Konrad von Fussesbrunnen’s poem is printed in Hahn’s “Gedichte der 12 und 13 Jarh.” 1840, p. 67.

been prefixed by W. Grimm to his new edition of the "Goldene Schmiede." For 200 years Konrad's poem was in great celebrity, and was an object of wonder and imitation to most of the succeeding writers on the same theme.

Among the vast mass of legends on single saints may be mentioned "Der Heilige Gregor auf dem Steine," written by Hartmann, after his "Erec," and before his "Iwein;" where his talents as a narrator are shown to the best advantage. The story, which used to be read out in the churches until the sixteenth century, is briefly this:—Gregory unwittingly married his own mother, and, to atone for the error, caused himself to be chained for seventeen years to a solitary rock in the ocean. At the expiration of this period it was revealed to the Romans that there was nobody among them worthy to fill the Papal stool, then vacant; but there was a man who had sat on a rock these seventeen years as an expiation for involuntary sin;—him they must choose. He is brought to Rome accordingly, and not only he, but his father and mother, who were brother and sister, obtain pardon of their sins. Sinners therefore must learn from this history, that pardon is vouchsafed to those only who are truly penitent.\* Rudolf von Ems's poem on the conversion of the heathen king, Barlaam, by a Christian youth,

\* "Gregor auf dem Steine" was first published by Greith, "Spicilegium Vaticanum." 1838, p. 180; then by Lachmann, 1838, in a complete shape. The legend is also in Koberger's "Passional" (1488), and in the "Postill und Ewangelij Buoch" (Basel, 1514), as a commentary on the Gospel of the 17th Sunday after Trinity. Bl. 222 c.

Josaphat by name, is also remarkable for genial narration. This legend, which has appeared in all languages, may be adduced as a model of legend-writing in detail, during the best period. Its date is between 1230 and 1240.\*

Two other legends exemplify Konrad von Würzburg's brilliancy of language and fullness of description. One is "Saint Sylvester," who, by the power of Christ, brought a wild steer to life again, which the Jewish leader had killed by the mention of Jehovah's name; upon which the Jews, and also Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, embrace Christianity.† The other is the legend of "Saint Alexius," which appeared in no less than eight versions. The simple form, however, in which it was produced by some unknown poet of the first half of the thirteenth century, is preferable to the more elaborate work of Konrad.‡

Alexius, the son of Euphemianus, a distinguished Roman, at the time of Theodosius the Great, marries a noble virgin, Adriatica by name. On the evening of the festal day, when the music and rejoicings are at their height, Alexius looks at a taper which

\* Rudolf's "Barlaam und Josaphat" was published by Köpke, 1818, and with correcter text, 1843, by F. Pfeiffer. There are also two other German poetical versions of this legend, one by a certain Bishop Otto. The first composition of it is ascribed usually to Johannes Damascenus, in the eighth century.

† Konrad von Würzburg's "Sylvester," von Wilhelm Grimm, Göttingen, 1841.

‡ "Sanet Alexius Leben in acht gereimten Mittel-hoch-deutschen Behandlungen, nebst geschichtlicher Einleitung so wie deutschen, griech. und latein. Anhängen." H. Massmann, 1843.

stands near, and thinks of the nothingness of all sub-lunary things. "See," says he, looking towards his blooming bride, "See, Adriatica, how brightly it burns, and yet it will soon be burnt out. So it is with the world, old and young soon return to dust. Man is a shadow that soon vanishes — a flower which quickly fades. Therefore will we take refuge from the world, think of our souls, and renounce these transitory joys." Hereupon he takes off the golden ring and gives it back to the bride. "God will preserve thee on the way," is the pious bride's reply. "I will continue true to thee for ever and aye." Alexius departs, while Adriatica falls into a swoon. Arrived at Pisa, he changes his goodly robes for the habit of a beggar, and suffers all sorts of privations of his own accord, till his bright face grows pale and squalid, and his rich locks thin; and no one recognised him. The messengers despatched by his father in quest of him, see him among the crowd of mendicants and give him alms, without knowing who he is. He next journeys to Edessa, and from thence to Jerusalem, sojourning for twelve years in the Holy Land. Meantime his parents sit upon the ground and mourn for their son. His bride, like a forlorn turtle-dove, laments her lover. Alexius returns to Lucca, and sits thirsty and a-hungred before an image of the Redeemer. The verger of the church meanwhile is informed, by a voice from heaven, that a poor man lies without, in prayer, whom God has need of. He must, therefore, lead him inside. On the entry of Alexius all the church bells in the city commence ringing. People flock together from all

quarters, and on learning what has happened, continue praising God all night. Alexius, shrinking from the honour in store for him, gets on board a ship sailing to Africa. But God disposes it otherwise, and the vessel is carried by a storm to Rome. Here he comes to his father's palace, and solicits alms. A pallet is laid for the beggar under the stairs. The servants throw hot broth on him as they pass, but he endures it all with patience. It was hard, forsooth, to see his father and mother pass by daily; harder still to see his bride, and hear her inquiries after Alexius. He tells how that he once knew Alexius; how constant and true he was. "And did he think of me?" inquires the bride. "Oh, yes; he thought of the ring he gave thee at parting, and how sad you were. And he thought of his father and mother, and then his heart was full. But he resigned all for the sake of eternal life." "Did he ever think to return?" she asks. "That I never could learn," is the answer. "Did he ever regret what he had done?" "Never." Thus they talked with one another day by day, and the sweet sorrow of the faithful bride was renewed each time they talked. But his voluntary sufferings at last came to an end. Alexius wrote on a parchment an account of his life and adventures, and so died with the document in his hand. At the same instant all the bells of the Lateran and the rest of the churches in Rome began ringing. God was the ringer. It is revealed that the saint is lying dead in the house of Euphemianus. Euphemianus discovers the corpse; the countenance is radiant with angelic light. In his hand he clutches the parchment. The



father, the two Emperors, Arcadius and Honorius, the Pope himself, all fail to disengage it from the dead man's grasp. Upon this Adriatica approaches, weeping, and the hand immediately relaxes its hold.

The lamentations which follow the discovery are eventually brought to an end by the Pope. The corpse is conveyed to the minster, and all sorts of wonders are performed at the coffin.

The father, who dies two years later, is buried on one side of the coffin, the mother on the other. Last of all, Adriatica dies also, and, at her request, her remains are consigned to the same coffin as her lover, the dust moving itself to make way for her virgin body.

Another poem, the style of which is pure and language good, hymns the praises of Saint Elizabeth, the most renowned saint of the middle ages. Every line of it is instinct with the love and devotion of the writer. This legend, which remained for a long time unknown, is in six books. It must not be confounded with a miserable doggerel on the same subject, written one hundred years later. No work could possibly give us a better notion of the thoughts and feelings of that period than this does. The saint herself is done to the life. We see her kneeling in prayer while the Holy Communion is being administered. "Exalted by love, floating in rapture, steeped in joy, surrounded by glory," her bliss is ineffable. With the inward eye she has seen the wonders of the Godhead. She next slumbers on the lap of her female friend Isentrut. In her sleep she smiles and weeps alternately; and on awaking exclaims,

“Yes, Lord, Thou wilt be with me and I with Thee for ever.” Being questioned, she states that she has seen the Lord Jesus in the spirit. When that compassionate countenance looked on her she smiled; when it was turned away she wept. And then he asked whether she would abide with him for ever. And she said, “Yea, Lord, for ever and ever. Never will I leave or forsake Thee.”

Celestial music is heard when she dies; her remains are carried to the tomb by emperors and princes, because in this life she despised worldly honours. All this, together with her exaltation to Heaven and canonization, is excellently described.\*

With the exception of a fragment of a poem on Saint George, written in the ninth century†, the legend of “Pilatus” may be considered one of the earliest that appeared in a German version. In style it resembles Wernher’s “Mary,” and the “Litany of All Saints,” mentioned above. The date of these poems is the same, viz., pretty early in the preparatory period, 1150–1190. The peculiarity of this composition is the odd mixture of Christian, German, and perhaps Celtic elements.

The tale runs thus. At Mayence there was a German king, Tyrus or Zirus by name, who ruled over the

\* Extracts from “Saint Elizabeth” are printed in Graff’s “Diutiska,” i. 343, *seq.* The poem was composed after the year 1297, for the death of Elizabeth’s second (third) daughter, the nun of Altenburg, is mentioned, and this occurred August 13, 1297.

† The oldest version of the legend of Saint George is a Leich, printed in Hoffmann’s “Fundgr.” i. p. 10. Another version, dating 1231–1253, by Reinbot von Durne, is printed, but in debased language, in Hagen and Büsching’s “Gedichte des Mittelalters,” 1 vol.

region of the Meuse, the Rhine, and the Main. This king had an illegitimate son, Pilatus, by the daughter of a poor miller. Pilatus, after killing his brother, who was the lawful heir to the throne, was sent by his father as a hostage to Rome. Here he committed a second murder, and was now sent to Pontus (so Pontius is written in the old Saxon "Harmony of the Gospels"), where he conquers the barbarians of the country, and is in consequence selected to subjugate the Jews. The fragment here breaks off, but the sequel of the legend is this. After the death of our Saviour, Pilatus, being summoned to Rome on account of his unjust sentence, committed suicide, and his body was thrown into the Tiber. A great inundation was the consequence. The body was therefore taken out of the Tiber and cast into the Rhone. But the evil spirit of the murderer of Christ could not rest; so to prevent disaster the body was again taken out and put into the lake on Mount Pilatus, in Switzerland. Here it will lie till the judgment-day. Whenever anything is cast into the lake, he lashes it into fury; and it is he that breeds the storms that descend from the mountain. It is not improbable that we owe this mixing up of Pilate with transactions in Germany, be they historical or mythic, to the twenty-second Roman Legion, which was stationed in Palestine at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, but soon after changed its quarters to Mayence.

With this legion the first Christians possibly arrived in Germany, and in the cruel king's son, who perhaps bore a similar name, they recalled the infamous Pilate of Palestine. His end, however, reminds us of the

water sprites of the Celtic sagas.\* The legend of "Saint Oswald" is similarly mixed up with stories of the mythic world and of old national heroes.† While the accounts of Saint Brandanus and his travels, like the Saga of "Duke Ernst," bear a strong resemblance to mediæval fairy tales.‡

Still more remarkable is the way in which the Christian legend, entitled "Der ungenähete Rock Christi (the seamless Coat of Christ)," which is said to have been discovered at Treves in 1512, attached itself as far back, perhaps, as the twelfth century to the oldest heroic Saga of Germany. This Saga has no connexion with any other Saga, and has therefore not yet been mentioned. The legend in question, the style of which combines the stiffness of the twelfth century with the uncouthness of the fifteenth century§, relates how the Grey Coat of Christ became the property of one King Orendel and his wife Breida. How that the said Orendel left his father, King Eigel of Treves, went on a sea-

\* The legend of "Pilate" is in Mone's "Anzeiger," 1835, Sp. 434. Massmann's "Ged. des 12 Jarh." 145.

† The legend of "Saint Oswald," by a strolling minstrel of the twelfth century, was published by Ettmüller, 1835. On the connexion between this description and the heroic legends "Orendel," "Traugmund," &c., see Mone's "Anzeiger," 1835, Sp. 414. A later version is in Haupt's "Zeitschrift," ii. 92.

‡ See a subsequent note respecting "Saint Brandanus."

§ The original version, dating from the twelfth century, and, like "Saint Oswald," and "Salomo and Morolf," composed by a stroller, was published, 1844, by V. d. Hagen; "Der ungenähte graue Rock Christi; wie König Orendel ihn erwirbt, darin Frau Breiden und das heilige Grab gewinnt und ihn nach Trier bringt," &c. It was printed from the unique MS. collated with the old Augsburg edition of 1512, which last is preferable to the MS. A translation of the old poem was published by Simrock, 1845; "Der ungenähte Rock," &c.

voyage, suffered shipwreck, and saved himself on a plank. After which he was sheltered by one Master Eisen, a fisherman, became possessed of the coat and also of Breida, the most beautiful of women, and returned to Treves. Shortly after which he died, as was foretold by an angel. Now in the "Heldenbuch" mention is made of a certain hero and king at Treves, Erntelle, together with his wife Brigita, and who was the oldest hero that ever was. Aventinus, likewise, in his chronicle, mentions one Herold, a bishop and king, or high-priest at Treves, and his wife Pyrga. His father's name was Eigel, a name perpetuated in the Eigel-Stones of the Rhine and Moselle to the present day. In the Northern Mythology we also meet with Orvandil (Orendel), whose toe was thrown by Thor up to Heaven, where it became a star. "Eearendel" is the Anglo-Saxon term for a glittering star.

Arundel, therefore, or, as it may originally have been written, Aruwentil, must signify the Arrow-shooter; all which indicates that we have before us a very ancient mythic personage. Nay, this probably explains the story of Tacitus in his "Germania," that Ulysses and his father Laertes once came to the Rhine and built Asciburgium, where an altar once stood inscribed with the name of Laertes. Now if Tacitus,—who considered Wuotan to correspond to Mercury, and Donar to Jupiter,—had ever got to hear of this Aruwentil and his father Eigil, he would very likely identify them with Ulysses and Laertes, and look upon the Eigel-stones as altars of Laertes; unless, perhaps, the conjecture may be hazarded that the

legend of Ulysses was at home in Germany quite as much as it was in Greece.\*

Having now finished our brief survey of the several groups of art-epic, we shall touch upon the isolated stories not connected with any one of these groups in particular. Some of these are after the fashion of the sacred legends, or Biblical stories. Others are not sacred, but profane in character, although with a few exceptions written in a grave style; while past and present, legend and history, or the poet's own fancy, in turn supply the subject-matter. They were, for the most part, to the thirteenth century what romances and novels are to the nineteenth. There is no rich legendary background to lend an interest to the story. The hero is quite detached from the traditional figures of the popular romances. The consequence is that their poetic value, for the most part, depends not on the matter, but on the power of the individual writer in each instance. This became essentially the case in the second half of the thirteenth century. The poet was everything, the material nothing. Literary history becomes thenceforward less a history of art than of books.

The "Annolied" is a piece written about 1170 in short-rhymed couplets. It describes the life and exploits of Anno, Archbishop of Cologne, from 1045 to

\* Respecting Orendel (Oervandil, Aruwentil), see J. Grimm's "Deutsche Mythologie," i. 347. Only that Wendel, cited by Grimm (ib. p. 349) from Mathesius (so also Simrock, p. xvii.), has nothing to do with Oervandil (Aruwentil). Mathesius alludes to S. Wendelinus, the patron Saint of Shepherds.



1075. Interspersed with these are poetical descriptions of notable events in Biblical and profane history. Among other personages, Julius Cæsar is introduced. Many passages are in the genuine popular vein, and admirably done. The commencement, for instance, is derived word for word from the old heroic songs, and most likely refers to the "Nibelungenlied." Another passage, descriptive of the Battle of Pharsalia, resembles parts of Lamprecht's "Alexander," and has the very air of an ancient war-song. "Cæsar sends for aid to the warriors of the German land, and when they knew his will, they assembled in great numbers from Gallia and Germania, with shining helmets, and strong hauberks and shields. Like a flood they poured upon the land; and as they approached Rome, Pompey and the Senate became alarmed, and fled to Egypt. Who can enumerate the hosts that hastened from the East to fight with Cæsar. They were like the snow falling on the Alps, like the hail rushing from the clouds. Cæsar advanced with inferior numbers, and then there was such a battle as never was seen in this world," (*merigarto, i. e., the world surrounded by the sea*). "Ha! how the weapons clanged when the warriors met; the horns bellowed, blood-streams flowed (*herehorn duzzin, beche blutis vluzzin*). The earth rumbled and the abyss trembled, when the mightiest of this world charged each other with the sword. There lay many a heap bathed in gore. There you might see Pompey's warriors die, cloven to the brain, when Cæsar won the victory." So again, when Anno, before his end, dreams that he is going to Heaven, and fancies that he comes

into a noble hall, hung with gold. "Many a gem blazed everywhere; song and manifold joy was there. There sat bishops shining like stars. Bishop Bardo was one, and Bishop Arnold, and Saint Heribert gleamed like gold; all of one life, all of one mind. And one stool is vacant; this is for Anno; here he soon will sit, as soon as the spot of mortality has been wiped out." M. Opitz's last work was an edition of this poem, which appeared a few weeks before his death of the plague in 1639. The old MS., the only one in existence, was burnt, together with his papers.

The "Kaiserchronik" was nearly contemporaneous with the "Annolied." It contains many passages which are also to be found in the "Annolied." How this came about is not ascertained. In this remarkable work, of which many versions appeared in the thirteenth century, we have a sort of legendary account of the most notable saints jumbled up together with profane history. The whole, however, is generally done in a good old poetic style.\*

\* This has appeared in two editions: first, Massmann's "Der Keiser und der Kunige buoch oder die sogen. Kaiserchronik. Ged. des 12 Jahrh. von 18,578 Reimzeilen nach 12 vollständigen und 17 unvollst. Handschriften nebst Wörterbuch," in three volumes. Also "Die Kaiserchronik nach der ältesten Handschrift des Stiftes Vorau," by Joseph Diemer. In the oldest MSS. it goes back to the year 1147, and must have been written in this form not later than 1160. A later version brings the work down to the death of Frederick II., and another to Rudolf of Hapsburg.

The "Annolied" is in the editions of Opitz's works, published by Fellgibel; also in that by Bodmer and Breiting, 1745, p. 179. It is wanting in the Frankfort and Amsterdam editions; an independent edition appeared in 1848, "Maere von Sente Annen" von Dr. Bezzenberger.

Rudolf von Ems, a prolific writer already mentioned, who lived just at the end of the best period, composed a similar work, which stood in even higher repute. This was done for Konrad IV., and contained all the Old Testament history down to Solomon, when the author's death prevented its completion. The style is after Gottfried von Strasburg, and is simple and graceful; sometimes too pleasing and courtly for the greatness of the theme. With this work Rudolf combined a history of heathen nations, whence the name "Weltchronik" given to the whole.\* Rudolf's superior powers as a poet become best apparent by comparing this poem with a similar work by Johann Enikel, an Austrian by birth, or with a stiff and tasteless imitation of Rudolf by some anonymous writer, living about the same time at the Thuringian court.† Rudolf's "Weltchronik" likewise merits notice as having been, down to Luther's time, the only source from which the laity obtained a knowledge of Old Testament history.

We shall now pass on to mention a few of the very numerous smaller sacred stories.

"Kaiser Heraclius," was written upon a foreign model by a certain Otto about the middle of the thirteenth century or a little later, but not, as Massmann its editor

\* Rudolf's "Weltchronik" is not yet printed, for the text of the edition of Schütze, 1779 and 1781, under the title of "Die Histor. Bücher des alten Testaments," is altogether corrupt. Extracts from the genuine work are in Graff's "Diutiska," i. 47-72; from the spurious and anonymous work in Docen's "Misc." ii. 39; and from both in Vilmar's "Die zwei Recensionen und die Handschriften-familien der Weltchronik, Rudolfs von Ems," 1839.

† Enikel's (Enenkel's) work is not yet printed. Extracts in Docen's "Misc." ii. 160.

oddly enough conjectures, by Otto von Freising, in the twelfth century. This poem is distinguished for its purity and fluency of diction.\* The fable is as follows : Heraclius, the son of rich parents, is gifted from his birth with the faculty of discerning the hidden power of stones, the value of horses, and the inmost thoughts and secret actions of women. After his father's death, his mother, with his consent, gives all her goods to the poor, and is reduced thereby to penury. The infant phenomenon himself becomes a slave. Eventually he is purchased by an Imperial chamberlain, and gives proofs of his wonderful powers in the presence of the Emperor. From among many thousand stones and horses, he selects what appears to be the most worthless stone and most worthless horse, and enacts with these such marvels as stone or horse never enacted before. He then, to the dismay of the many beautiful and high-born dames who thronged the court, selects as a wife for the Emperor, a low-born damsel. It is true she was very beautiful, but she was more, she was chaste,—a quality which the others wanted, as Heraclius well knew by the magic power which he possessed. For many years the Emperor, whose name is Phocas, lives on the happiest terms with his Athenais. At last, before going out to war, he determines, contrary to the advice of Heraclius, to immure her, during his absence, in a tower. This over-carefulness leads to a similar catastrophe with that in “Tristan” and other

\* “Heraclius Deutsches und Französisches Ged. des 12 Jahrh. jenes von Otto, dieses von Gautier von Arras.” Massmann, 1842, edited for the first time.

poems. The lady is piqued, and by the aid of an old woman, called Morphea, dishonours her husband. All this is narrated in the fashion of Gottfried, and with much of his ornament. On the return of the Emperor with Heraclius from the expedition, the lynx-eyed seer finds her out at once. She is made to do penance, and by the advice of Heraclius, who lays the blame on the Emperor himself, she is divorced and married to her lover. After this signal proof of his wisdom, Heraclius becomes more famous than ever; till at last he is made Emperor. After this, he recovers, in a dreadful war, the Holy Rood, which had been carried off by the Persians; an event which the Romish church still commemorates at the festival of the Elevation of the Cross. The first half of this story—which is thus mixed up with the well-known legend of the elevation of the Cross—is borrowed from the far nobler story of “Crescentia,”\* which belongs to the twelfth century. In this, Crescentia is entrusted by her husband, during his absence at the wars, to his brother. This brother tempts her to break her marriage vows; but she resists his base proposals, and manages to shut him up in a tower. The wretch maligns her to her husband on his return, who spurns her from him. She endures much misery without complaint, until her innocence is established, and she becomes a saint in consequence. This tale is the foundation of many others of similar import, *e. g.*, “Griseldis.”

\* The oldest form of “Crescentia” is to be found in the “Kaiserchronik.” A version of the thirteenth century is in “Mailath und Köffinger Coloczaer Codex Altdeutscher Gedichte,” 1817, p. 245. A prose version in “Haupt und Hoffmann’s altdeutsche Blätter,” i. 300.

This mixture of the sacred and the profane in Heraclius is a proof of the gradual secularisation of ecclesiastical life. Hartmann von der Aue's poem "Der arme Heinrich," which he wrote at the close of the twelfth century\*, is a pious or moral poem in the best sense, though it has nothing of the legend about it. From the twelfth to the sixteenth century, Europe was visited by the plague of leprosy, and the extent of its ravages may be guessed from the many hospitals for lepers still existing in the outskirts of German towns. Many superstitions prevailed in respect to this disease; one of which was that it could only be cured by the blood of a virgin, who gave herself up as a voluntary sacrifice. Upon this half-heathen superstition is based Hartmann's delightful story. A rich man, blessed with every human happiness, falls sick of the disorder, and suffers all the tortures of Job. But unlike Job, instead of being patient, he curses the day and hour that he was born. The doctors of Salerno, in Italy, to which city he repaired for advice, could do him no good. The only means of cure they were able to suggest was that mentioned above. But of what use was their suggestion? For where could a virgin be found who would sacrifice herself for one smitten with leprosy? Poor Heinrich returns to his home in Suabia, sorrowful and dejected, gives up his possessions, and retires to a lone farm-house. The farmer's daughter, a girl of

\* Hartmann's "Armer Heinrich" is one of the Middle-High-German poems that have been most frequently edited, *e. g.* in "Müller's Collection," vol. i.; then in 1815, by the Grimms; afterwards by Lachmann; by Wackernagel, 1842; by W. Müller, with glossary; and by Haupt; and translated by Simrock, 1830.



twelve years, touched with compassion at his sufferings, nurses him just as if he were clean, and not an object of loathing to all the world. After some time she hears of the one only method by which he could be cured, and straightway the idea seizes her that it is she who is to effect the cure. In the stillness of the night the young creature weeps as she broods over this idea; and her readiness to die, her ardent longing to give relief to the sick person, the firmness with which she adheres to her resolve, in spite of the entreaties of her parents and the patient, who at first looks upon it as a mere girlish freak; all this is admirably described. She sets out in company with her sick master to Salerno, does not flinch for a moment under the cross-examination of the physician, who wants to make out that she is acting under intimidation; nor yet at the sight of the knife which is whetted before her eyes. The pure disinterested affection of a devoted female heart could not possibly be described more touchingly and truly than it is here by Hartmann. At last, just at the very moment when the maiden is about to be slaughtered, Heinrich, melted by her exceeding goodness, ceases to be so anxious for his cure, yields to the will of God, and humbly takes his sickness as a dispensation of the Almighty. At his request, the physician desists from the deadly operation, while he returns home in company with the damsel, whose only grief is that she has not been permitted to fall a sacrifice. And lo! now that he has humbled himself before God, his leprosy is taken away. In the end the maiden becomes the wife of him, whom she had thus saved bodily as well as spiritually.

Rudolph von Ems's "Der gute Gerhard," which after having been long supposed to be lost, has lately turned up, is a poem of similar tendency, though more secular in form.\* The Emperor, Otho the Red, according to the story, was a wise and just emperor, and his wife Otto-gebe, a kind-hearted lady, who moves her husband to spend his wealth in pious objects, and among other things, to found the bishopric of Magdeburgh. The story, by the way, confounds Otho the Great with his son Otho II., called the Red, from the colour of his hair. The Emperor, however, becomes vainly puffed at the thought of what good he has done, and parades his own merits before the Almighty; whereupon it is revealed to him that God will no more regard his offerings. Temporal honour he may have, but spiritual and eternal glory shall never be his. He ought to have acted like the Good Gerhard, a simple merchant at Cologne, whose name, though he was no prince, was written down in the book of the living. Upon this the Emperor sets out for Cologne to see this man. In reply to the Emperor's inquiries, Gerhard says that the Good Gerhard is only a chance nickname given him by the people of the city. This does not satisfy his Majesty, till at last Gerhard is induced to relate his history, but not until after he had wrestled in prayer, and satisfied himself that there would be nothing wrong in so doing. The tale which follows is furnished with all

\* "Der Gute Gerhard, eine Erzählung von Rudolf von Ems," Moritz Haupt, 1840. The Saga is certainly not Rudolf's invention, but who was the author is not ascertained. Simrock translated it into modern German, 1847.

the ornament of chivalric poetry, while it is at the same time a model description of simplicity and unpretending modesty. Once Gerhard's thoughts were centred upon the acquisition of riches, and the great object of his ambition was that his son should, like him, be called the rich Gerhard. Having by a lucky venture gained a large sum of money in heathen lands, he voluntarily parted with the whole of it to ransom some English knights, and a Norwegian king's daughter, from slavery. He then relates how this damsel was betrothed to an English king, William, who had disappeared in a storm at sea; how he took and nourished her for years at his house at Cologne, in hopes that her lover would appear; but at last, being convinced that the king was no more, he makes preparations for marrying her to his son; when suddenly the lost king appears, although in beggar's apparel.

Gerhard makes his son at once resign all claims to the lady. He accompanies the king to England, and is recognised by the English nobility, who wish to raise him to the throne; but he steadfastly declines all honour and reward, and will only, "for the sake of the red lips of the beautiful queen, his foster-daughter," accept a breast ornament and a ring for his wife, and then returns a simple merchant to Cologne. All this is so vividly narrated that we fancy we have the lowly-minded, yet energetic, Gerhard before us. His example has such an effect upon the Emperor, when he thinks of the little good that he himself has done, and his pride on the strength of it, that he returns to Magdeburg and confesses that the good a man does he must do, not for

his own sake, but for God's, else it is not good. He repents of his presumption, and now he achieves not only temporal, but eternal glory.

This work of Rudolf is perhaps his oldest and best, and the one best suited for the exhibition of his powers. His "Wilhelm von Dourlens, or Orlienz,"\* is an inferior production. It is the history—after a foreign model, and mixed up with much legendary matter—of a Brabant prince. Most of the secular stories—of which this is one—are based upon foreign originals. Some go back to the twelfth century: *e. g.*, the fragment of the "Graf Rudolf," edited by W. Grimm†, which pleasantly describes the life of the Crusaders. "Darifant," "Demantin," and "Crane," are three similar poems by Bertolt von Holle, who lived in the middle of the thirteenth century.‡ Other poems are of German origin, as Konrad von Wurzburg's well-told legend of

\* "Orlienx," not yet printed, is a history of Wilhelm the Conqueror, handled in a foreign fashion. An extract in Mone's "Anzeiger," 1835, Sp. 27.

† "Grâve Ruodolf," 1828, 4.; "Graf Rudolf," second edition, 1844, 4.

‡ "Darifant" and "Demantin" are as yet only known in fragments; those from "Darifant" were discovered and published by Nyerup; reprinted by W. Müller, in Haupt's "Zeitschrift," ii. 179. Those from "Demantin" are in Massmann's "Denkmäler," 75. Fragments of "Crane" were first discovered and published by W. Grimm (under the title of "Assundin." Lemgo, 1827); others by W. Müller, and published by him in Haupt's "Zeitschrift," i. 57. He soon concluded that the writer of the two above works and this must be one and the same person. Recently an almost perfect MS. of "Crane" has been discovered. The connection between "Crane" and "Graf Rudolf," only conjectured by Vilmar, has been proved by W. Grimm, "Gr. Rud.," second edition, p. 47.

“The Emperor Otho with the Beard.” Here we learn how the Emperor has sworn by his beard to take vengeance on Heinrich von Kempten, who has killed his steward. How Heinrich hereupon lugs the Imperial beard; how he masters the Emperor, and compels him to give him his life, on condition that he sees his face no more. How Heinrich after this saves the Emperor’s life in the Italian wars, gets pardoned in consequence, and is promoted to great honours.\* There are also extant two remarkable historic poems upon King Albrecht and Adolf von Nassau, and the battle of Hasenbühl, on July 2, 1298; the first of which contains allusions to the sagas of “Dietrich” and “Sigfrid.”†

“Meier Helmbrecht” is important as a delineation of German peasant life at the commencement of the thirteenth century. Its author was an Austrian, Werner der Gärtner.‡

“Herzog Ernst” is one of the few old national Sagas which have survived among the people until the present day. It existed, though not as a poem, before the year 1180, but only two small fragments are extant of it in that original shape. In the middle of the thirteenth century a fresh version of it appeared, which was for a

\* “Otte mit dem Barte,” von Cuonrad von Würzeburc, von A. Hahn, 1838.

† The poem here meant of “King Albrecht and Adolf von Nassau,” is in Haupt’s “Zeitschrift,” iii. 7–25. It contains Lower-Rhine forms of expression. A totally different, and much less important poem, is one printed in Graff’s “Diutiska,” iii. 314–323.

‡ The poem of “Meier Helmbrecht,” which is supposed to have been of Bavarian origin, is printed in Haupt’s “Zeitschrift,” iv. 318; also in the “Wiener Jahrbücher,” 1839.

long time attributed to Veldekîn; but this supposition could not be correct, for it is not likely that he survived beyond the beginning of that century. That he was the author even of the older poem is more than doubtful.\*

Herzog Ernst is the son of the Bavarian Duchess Adelheit, who takes for her second husband Otho the Red. Otho is here confounded, as in two other poems, with his father, Otho the Great. Ernst has a feud with his step-father, and quits the kingdom, going on a journey to Jerusalem with his faithful retainer, Count Wetzol. Now it happens that in history two rebellious Dukes Ernst are mentioned; one a Bavarian, in the time of Ludwig the Pious; the other a Suabian, in the time of Konrad the Salian, in the eleventh century, and actually that Emperor's step-son by his wife Gisela, and both were assisted by a Count Wernher, or Wetzol; so that here we have a mixture of dates and persons pretty much in the same way as Attila and Dietrich are mixed up in the Saga. The son-in-law of Konrad died at Constance in 1030, and soon after that he became a hero of popular romance in that part of Germany. But it is the second part of the Saga which

\* In the year 1180 Count Berthold von Andechs applied to Abbot Ruprecht, of Tegernsee, for permission to copy the "*Libellus teutonicus de Herzogen Ernesten*." In the thirteenth century the legend must have been widely disseminated; in prose, however, and not in song, as is plain from the reference in "*Maier Helmbrecht*," v. 956. The fragments of the oldest versions, dating from the twelfth century, are printed in Hoffmann's "*Fundgrube*," i. 228. The older recension of the version of the thirteenth century remains unprinted; the later one is published by v. d. Hagen, in "*Ged. des Mittelalters*," 1811.



has lent to it its chief interest. Here we are introduced to the fabulous wonders of the East. On his journey to Jerusalem Duke Ernst arrives at a lonely castle, the magnificence of which recalls to us the famous Castle of the Gral. But in this castle, although it is provided with an abundance of good cheer, there is not a human being to be seen. The Crusaders enjoyed themselves here for some days, feasting on the cool wines and dainty viands, and bathing in the golden baths, which are fed by pipes of silver. At last one morning an extraordinary sound is heard, just as if a quantity of cranes were going to alight at the castle. And sure enough there they came, the sharp-nebbed generation, with their long dry necks, and beaks an ell long. They are clad in costly silks, and an Indian maiden, whom they had carried off, is in the midst of them, looking in her tears like a rose bathed in dew. The crane-king presents his long neb to her red little mouth, and makes tender love-speeches in tones anything but harmonious. Ernst and his knights, enraged at the sight, set upon the cranes; numbers fell on both sides, but they fail to rescue the damsel owing to the deadly strokes of the cranes' bills. The chieftains again put to sea, and eventually discern a lofty island, with a forest of masts adhering to it. This is a magnetic rock, which draws vessels towards it. Ernst's ship is soon cracking to pieces among the ruins of countless barks that have perished there already. The Duke and his surviving companions are then carried by griffins to another island. Eventually he comes to the country of the Arimasps, who have only one eye, and assists their king in his war with the Flat-feet, as they are called.

This people can run across morasses, where neither horse nor man can follow them, and, when it is wet weather, put their feet over their heads like an umbrella. He also goes against the Long-ears, who use their ears at times for cloaks, and then against a race of giants so big that Ernst only reaches to their knee. In every contest he is victorious. At length he arrives at Jerusalem, where he performs further wonderful exploits. He then returns to Germany, and on Christmas morn becomes reconciled to the Emperor, who relents as he hears the Bishop read the Gospel of the day, and thinks of the blessings which this anniversary commemorates. As the reader will have seen, most of these incidents are derived from the oriental fairy tales. In the fifteenth century this poem was converted into a popular song, and became so great a favourite that the measure of Bern, in which it was written, was also called Duke Ernst's measure. There is another version of "Herzog Ernst," which dates from the sixteenth century, but which is derived from a Latin source.

There are other poems composed of like popular materials, but written in a playful tone. "Solomon and Morolf" is a piece of this description. Morolf is an astute fool, who, in a conversation with King Solomon, turns each of his wise sayings into nonsense.

Something of the kind existed as early as the sixth century; and in the thirteenth Morolf had grown into a proverb. In fact, there are two poems of this name: one by a popular poet of the twelfth century,\* the

\* The perversion of Solomon's wisdom by Morolf is referred to by Freidank (81, 3-4). There are many genuine German features about

other is a dialogue, of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. In this, Morolf (or Markolf, as he is here called,) asserts that Nature beats habit. Solomon has a favourite cat who has been taught to sit by him at table, and hold a candle. Markolf lets a mouse out of his sleeve, which runs across the table. The cat starts, but a menacing motion is made by the king, and art prevails over Nature. A second mouse runs out of Markolf's sleeve, and the cat, in its agitation, shakes the light to and fro; but the threatening attitude of the king has its effect, and habit is still victorious. A third mouse jumps out, and down goes the candle, and with it crockery and habit are overthrown.

The second poem of this sort is "Pfaffe Amis." Pfaffe Amis is one of those heroes of roguery and fun, of lying and trickery, which have been current for centuries in Germany under the names of Pfaffe von Kalenberg, Peter Leu, Bochart, and, lastly, of Till Eulenspiegel. Pfaffe Amis, whose name and condition are most likely derived from England, but whose roguish tricks are of German growth, is a diverting personage. In France, Loraine, England, and Constantinople, — everywhere, in short, — he evinces equal dexterity in hoaxing greenhorns. This poem, which abounds with

the story of "Solomon and Morolf." J. Grimm ("Mythol.," second edition, p. 415) seems almost to consider it a German legend, *i. e.* with foreign names and localities. Both pieces, the story of "Solomon and Morolf," and the dialogue between them, are printed in Hagen and Büsching. In point of form "Orendel" much resembles "Solomon and Morolf." In it, too, the five-lined strophe originally prevailed, afterwards known as the "Jacobston," "Lindenschmidt," and "Schlacht von Pavia." Both the poems are divided into parts, corresponding with the draughts of wine handed to the narrators.

wit and humour, is the work of the same Stricker (as he is called) who wrote an indifferent version of the "Rolandslied." Here, however, he is completely at home. The same may be said of his short stories and fables.\*

Parson Amis has a fat benefice, of which his bishop intends to deprive him, unless he can answer certain questions. He is no other than Bürger's Abbot of St. Gall, whom Bürger borrowed from Burkhard Waldis, who in his turn had taken him from the oral popular traditions of his time. "How many days is it since Adam?" is one of the questions put to Amis. "Seven," is the reply, "and after that another seven, and so on." "Where is the centre of the world?" "My church," answers Amis, "is just in the centre. Let your servants measure with a cord, and if I am wrong by the breadth of a straw you may take away my benefice." This joke is still extant in reference to a village in Lower Hussia. "How far are we from heaven?" "As far as a man can bawl. Mount up, Sir Bishop, and if, when you are up there, you don't hear my voice from below, I've lost." Amis is next compelled to teach an ass, on pain of losing his place. "A man," he remarks, "requires twenty years to learn anything well, so for an ass we shall want thirty." This is agreed to, and he proceeds to purchase a little donkey for the purpose, before which he places an old volume with hay inserted between the leaves. Long-ears being

\* "Pfaffe Amis" is given best in Benecke's "Beiträge," ii. 493; also before (1817) in the "Coloczaer Codex." There is also an old edition of the poem, of the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century. A translation of it appeared by Berlitz, in 1851.

hungry, fumbles about for the hay, and turns over the leaves in search of it. Presently the Bishop arrives to examine the donkey-school. "You see, my Lord, he has made some progress already. He can manage to turn over the leaves." The Bishop expresses his satisfaction at what has been done. Amis next takes his grey-coated pupil into the room, and places before him on the table a large book, quite new, but with no hay in it. The donkey, anxious for provender, begins diligently turning over the leaves as before; and not finding any thing, expresses his dissatisfaction by discordant braying. "See, Sir Bishop," says Amis, "he is beginning his alphabet. At present he has not got further than the first letter, which he has repeated with such emphasis in order to do you honour." This is one of the best-known tricks of the real Eulenspiegel. What follows shows the position in which the laity of Germany stood in relation to the clergy in the middle of the thirteenth century, which is the date of the original story.

Amis visits a rich and foolish farmer's wife, whose husband is from home. To her he pretends to be an exceedingly pious individual, and she is quite delighted at the idea of having so much godliness under her roof. At his request the household cock is killed and roasted. This Amis eats clean up, all but the bones, promising that before cock-crow next morning she shall be rewarded two-fold, both temporally and eternally, for the sacrifice. The rogue had previously purchased a cock the fac-simile of the victim. This he lets slip at dawn, and it immediately begins to

crow. "Behold thy cock again," he says. "The sign has been vouchsafed. Thou art sure of eternal salvation." All which the good housewife religiously believes. He then celebrates mass with thirty tapers around him, and gives indulgences for all sins, past, present, and to come. Before his departure, at the lady's earnest entreaty, he accepts as a present a bale of white linen, 100 ells long. But hardly has he departed, when the husband comes home, and learns what a fool his wife has been making of herself. "By Heaven, I'll make him disgorge the cloth," he cries, and starts off in hot pursuit. Amis espies him on his track, and nimbly inserts a piece of burning tinder in the folds of the bale. Pale with rage, the rider charges at him with these words: "Villain and cheat, out with the cloth." With admirable humility, Amis supplicates him not to visit on his head his wife's act of piety. "She had forced it upon him; there was the cloth; he had no wish to retain it." After administering a sound drubbing to his reverence, the good man makes off in high spirits at the recovery of his property. By and by he observes a smell of burning. The cloth begins to smoke. The rider unwraps it; when lo! it is all in a blaze. Conscience-stricken, the man at once perceives that this is a punishment from Heaven upon him, for taking away what had been given to God. Frightened out of his wits, he leaves the cloth burning on the grass, and starts helter-skelter after the priest, whom he begs for mercy's sake to pardon him, and he will repay him double. Upon these terms the cunning sharper expresses himself satisfied. The neighbours,



too, pay him pretty stiffly to be remembered in his prayers; and the good priest, who had been favoured with such a signal manifestation from Heaven, becomes thoroughly appeased. “Töffel im Paradiese,” dating from the fifteenth century, is evidently another version of this story.\*

We shall now pass on to consider the Animal-sagas. It has already been shown that the Saga of “Reinhart the Fox and Isengrim the Wolf” was taken by the Franks over the Rhine.†

The root of this Saga lies in the harmless natural simplicity of a primæval people. We see described the delight which the rude child of nature takes in the animals,—in their slim forms, their gleaming eyes, their fierceness, nimbleness, and cunning. Such Sagas, illustrative of the ways and doings of the beasts, would naturally have their origin in an age when the ideas of the shepherd and the hunter occupied a great portion of the intellectual horizon of the people; when the herdsman saw in the ravenous bear one who was his equal, and more than his equal, in force and adroitness, the champion of the woods and wilds; when the hunter, in his lonely ramble through the depths of the

\* A joke, related in most of the German “Joe Millers” of the sixteenth century, and also elaborated by Hans Sachs. The widow of a peasant fancies a student arrived from Paris is come from Paradise, and gives him some presents for her husband there. See also “Jugendzeitung,” 1808, No. 143.

† The only satisfactory account of the character of the “Thiersage” is given by Jacob Grimm in his introduction to “Reinhart Fuchs,” 1834.

forest, beheld in the hoary wolf and red fox, as they stole along, hunters like himself,—mates, so to say, and companions, and whom he therefore addressed as such. But there was another reason why herdsman and hunter wished to be on a good footing with these denizens of the solitudes. It was not so much the physical violence of these beasts that they dreaded, as the invisible demon within them: that demon which glared out so terribly from the eyes of the wolf, and exercised such a supernatural power. So that these animals came to be looked on as an incorporation of the dark powers of nature. Hence it was that the herdsman would call the wolf by any name but its own. The wolf was gold-foot, the fox blue-foot. In Hussia the wolf was called Hölzing, *i. e.*, the creature of the wood, while in other parts of Germany his name was disguised under wul or wulch, instead of plain wolf.\*

So that originally this kind of poetry was the exponent of a peculiar sort of feeling prevailing among the people, and had nothing whatever to do with the didactic or satiric; although at a later period satiric allusions began to be interwoven with it.

At first the personages were the beasts of the German forest: the wolf, the fox, with the bear as king, though subsequently the lion took his place; and this fact indicates that the Animal-saga was indigenous to Germany; or, more properly, it may be said to belong to the Franks. For, apparently, the Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians knew as little of it as did the Celts. Its

\* So the Norwegians call this animal Graabeen, grey-legs.—*Editor.*

home was the centre of Western Germany, the North of France, with Flanders (where the soft-toned Provençal dialect yielded to the German), and, later, Northern Germany. At no period did the Animal-saga penetrate to the South of France.

The names, too, as has been briefly indicated before, are German. The epic name of the wolf is Isangrim, *i. e.*, eisengrimmig (iron-grim), indicating the sharpness of the wolf's bite. The fox is called Reginhart, *i. e.*, the prudent counsellor. The bear is Bruno, the brown. All of them appellations bestowed likewise on mankind, and thus raising these animals to something much above mere beasts in the abstract.

Subsequently, when the Saga came back again to Germany from France, some of the secondary personages retained their French name, *e. g.* the cock, which is called Chanteclêr (in Reineke Vos, Cantard). This is also the case with the lion (noble), after he was promoted to be king of the beasts instead of the bear. This exchange of kings is due to French influence. In Fromund of Tegernsee's poem (about 990), the bear is still king. But in the middle of the twelfth century, when the Saga had returned from France, the lion was on the throne. The ass always kept his original name Baldewin (hence the present French name Baudet for that animal), which means jolly, unconcerned how the world wags, provided he may enjoy his thistle in quiet. The she-wolf is Herisuintha (corrupted into Hersant in the French), *i. e.* strong and quick as the host of fighting men. These Animal-sagas are localised, for instance, in Flanders, at Arras; in Germany, on the Rhine; in the same way as

the Nibelung-saga was also localised. In the allegorical and satirical poems, this localisation is evidently sought on purpose; but in the original Animal-saga it is, so to say, quite unintentional and by chance. Lastly, we must not omit to specify the quiet simplicity of the narrative, without any ornament or design. And then it will not be too much to say, that we have here an epic based, no less than the heroic epic, on the truth of nature,—an epic which found a thousand responsive chords in the bosom of the people, and was handed down carefully from father to son for many generations.

In the same way that the heroic epic grew gradually out of a number of heroic tales and war-songs, mixed up with accounts of mythic deities; so the animal-epic of Germany must have been formed by degrees out of tales of the chase, poetically blended with pieces of animal mythology.

After circulating in the mouths of the people for many centuries, it was first committed to writing in the Netherlands. The earliest specimen was written in Latin, under the title of “Isengrimus,” by one Magister Nivardus of South Flanders, at the beginning of the twelfth or end of the eleventh century. Here there are only two wolf-stories, one showing how the sick lion was cured by the hide of Isengrim; another concerning the pilgrimage of the chamois who had been waylaid by Isengrim. The second work on the subject is also in Latin. It appeared in North Flanders about fifty years later than the first, under the title of “Reinardus.” Besides the above two tales, it contains ten more. Satirical allusions to the Pope and ecclesiastical government generally appear in it. Much animosity is

shown to the Cistercians and their founder St. Bernard; so that the author must have been a Benedictine.

About the middle of the twelfth century, that is, at the period when "Reinardus" appeared in Flanders, the Animal-saga went through the same process as the Carolingian Epic. After springing up in Germany it passed over to France, and then back again to the place of its birth; only, that the subject-matter was retained much more tenaciously than in the case of the Carolingian Epos, there being nothing foreign in it but the names already mentioned.

The author of this new German version of the Saga after the French was one Heinrich der Glichesäre, as he called himself, of Alsace. It appeared in the middle of the twelfth century, and contains ten tales about the fox and the wolf, written in the severe style of that century. About fifty, or at the most sixty, years later, this poem, "Reinhart Fuchs," was re-written in the purer German that had prevailed since Veldekîn's time; but, beyond this, it was little altered. The author's name is not mentioned. Both these poems are in short rhymed couplets, the usual form of narrative poetry. The latter came to light again about 1816. The former, that by Glichesäre, was considered lost, until a few years ago, when a third of it was discovered written on some parchment book-covers at Melsungen, in Hessa.\* After this period, there appeared a number of French versions, which contained as many as twenty-seven stories.

\* J. Grimm, "Sendschreiben an Karl Lachmann über Reinhart Fuchs," 1840.

In 1250 a Dutch version appeared by one Willem (commonly called de Matoc), which work was continued, but in a very inferior style, by an anonymous writer in the middle of the fourteenth century.

At the end of the fifteenth century, Willem's "Reinaert," which had been divided into books, was translated by one Nikolaus Baumann, a Westphalian, living at Lübeck, into Low-German under the title of "Reineke Vos." The original High-German version, and even the name "Reinhart," have been superseded in consequence. In this Dutch version the satirical parts are stronger than in the old High-German version of the Saga. Hence, in the sixteenth century, a period which was especially prone to satire, the false notion got abroad that the whole piece was intended for a satire; that it was a *speculum vitæ aulicæ* (mirror of court-life); and it was actually translated into Latin. Of the original impression of the poem, which appeared in 1498, only one copy is extant; another edition appeared in 1711, by Hackman; and a third in 1834, by Hoffmann von Fallersleben, with a good glossary attached. Among many versions from the Latin, one was by Gottsched, who was but ill fitted for such a work, and another by Goethe. This last, as J. Grimm observes, is not natural enough and simple enough to give us a correct idea of the genuine Animal-saga.\*

\* The idea of the Brothers Grimm upon the whole amounts to this: that the æsopic or didactic animal fable is a corruption of the "Thier-sage." The shaping of the fable to suit the epimythia (moral) is destructive to its poetic simplicity. Gervinus on the other hand considers the fables of Æsop and the German animal fable as entirely independent of each other.



As in the heroic Epos, there are certain poems which are isolated altogether from the main stream, such as "Ecken Ausfart;" and others, like "Hörnerne Sigfried," which, though blended with the main current of heroic song, also exist in an independent form. So it is with animal Epic. And out of these isolated poems seems to have arisen Animal Fable.

In the thirteenth century, fable was called *bîspel*, *i. e.* *beispiel*, example. Epic, on the other hand, was designated as *maere*; and this is the term used of the "Reinhart Fuchs," showing that it was in reality an epic narrative, and not a fable.

Of this fable, then,—in which animals appear, and which is totally distinct from the animal Epic,—there were three writers who lived in the best days of German poetry. The Stricker above mentioned, the author of a version of the "Rolands-lied," of "Priest Amis," and other short tales;—Boner, the Swiss, and Gerhart von Minden, which last lived a little later, *viz.*, in the middle of the fourteenth century. All of them narrate in a simple and agreeable tone; the Stricker especially. His collection of fables is called "Die Welt," (the world); where the experiences of daily life are illustrated by examples from animate and inanimate nature.\* Boner's ninety-nine or one hundred fables were written about the year 1300. He borrows a good deal from *Æsop*. The title of his work, which is perhaps the oldest *German* printed book (1461, at Bamberg), was "Edelstein;" and it con-

\* The original collection of Stricker's fables is hardly now extant; many of them have been printed, *e. g.* in the Brothers Grimm's "Alt-deutsche Wälder."

tinued to be a favourite with the public for two hundred years.\* Gerhart also follows Æsop. His work was only lately discovered.† These three are the models for the fable-writers of the sixteenth century, Erasmus Alberus and Burkhard Waldis, who in their turn were imitated by Hagedorn, Gellert, Lichtwer, Zacharia, Lessing (partly), down to Frölich, the fable-writer of our time.

We now pass from didactic fable to didactic poetry, properly so called. Maxims of worldly wisdom, descriptions of the customs, circumstances, and ideas of that day; warnings against evil; exhortations to chastity and honour; such are its topics. As early as the twelfth century there were writers in this line. There is still extant a piece by one Heinrich, an Austrian poet, written before the year 1163. It is in two parts; the first is entitled "Vom gemeinen Leben," *i. e.*, Concerning common Life; the second, "Von des Todes Gehügede," *i. e.*, Thoughts upon Death. The diction is good, and the style earnest and impressive.‡ Another collection of maxims, entitled "Bescheidenheit des Freidank," is well known. It was written in May

\* Boner's "Edelstein" was published, 1757, by Bodmer ("Fabeln aus der Zeit der Minnesinger"); 1816, by Benecke; and last, 1844, by Franz Pfeiffer.

† "Gerhart von Minden" belongs properly to the following period, as he wrote his fables in 1370. They are 102 in number. Of these, twenty-one, together with the titles of the others, have been published by the discoverer, F. Wiggert, Magdeburg, 1836, in the work called "Zweites Scherflein zur Förderung der Kenntniss deutscher Mundarten und Schriften."

‡ Heinrich's poem is printed in Massmann's "Deutsche Gedichte des 12 Jahrh." ii. p. 343, with which compare the supplement by J. Grimm, in the "Gött. gel. Anzeiger," 1838, No. 56.

1229. Under the term "Bescheidenheit" (modesty) was anciently comprehended the power of possessing a due amount of world-wisdom and probity combined. The name "Freidank" is, perhaps, a fictitious one. Grimm conjectures the real author to have been Walther von der Vogelweide, the first lyric poet of his day.\* The work consists, for the most part, of popular sayings, such as were then in vogue, and even now, after a space of six hundred years, still continue to be so. They are put together with much skill; and the language is all the more impressive for being simple and homely. The other portion of the book contains the reflections of one well versed in the highest and lowest grades of ecclesiastical life, as well as in political and social affairs, upon the faults of the age. His censures are grave and earnest, but free from all malice and bitterness. He describes a chattering tongue as being boneless itself, but breaking stone and bone; separating friends, disgusting lovers with love. Court-fashion, as compelling a short man to walk upon tip-toe. Deceit and lying as more welcome at court than the children of princes, and agreeable to all Lords, but the Lord of all. He gives us maxims about money, that notable salve, than can soften the most obstinate disposition. We then have observations on Rome, and the ecclesiastical government there; and on the Crusades, in which the author himself bore a part under the Emperor Frederick the Second. At one time, he

\* "Vridankes Bescheidenheit," von W. Grimm, 1834. J. Grimm has advanced strong reasons against the identity of Walther von der Vogelweide and Freidank in "Gedichte des Mittelalters auf König Friedrich I.," 1844, p. 8.

enlivens us with a vein of pleasantry; at another, his talk is of solemn subjects—God and eternity, anti-christ and the last day. But whatever the topic, there is a genuine, a natural, and healthy tone throughout. There is nothing forced or artificial, nothing superfluous or wearisome; so pithy and rapid is the whole, that it is more like action than description. Very soon after this poem was written, it rose into universal estimation. As early as 1260, poets quoted Freidank and his wise sayings. It seemed as if he had been the first to give expression to that which was already in the hearts and mouths of thousands. He was one of the few ancient writers that lived in the grateful recollection of the people down to the seventeenth century, when all that was good sank into oblivion. His work was called a secular Bible, and it still may serve as a *vade mecum*, full of pleasure and profit.

Tomasin von Zirklaere, a native of Friule, who was originally unacquainted with the German language, wrote a poem entitled the “Welsche Gast,” about 1216. This work likewise deserves favourable mention, on account of its tone and style; but it has neither the freshness nor the popular air of Freidank’s “Bescheidenheit.”\*

In the year 1300 a similar work appeared by one Hugo von Trimberg, a schoolmaster of Theuerstadt, a suburb of Bamberg. It was entitled “Renner.” But it is inferior in most respects to Freidank’s poem. At times it is unnecessarily spun out; long-winded re-

\* On Tomasin’s family name, see Haupt’s “Zeitschrift,” v. 241. His work was published by Rückert, 1852.

flections and stories being introduced to illustrate the maxims. Besides which no little erudition is super-added, a thing unknown to Freidank. The strange title *Renner*, *i. e.* runner, indicates that it is meant to run through all lands and disseminate wisdom. In fact, it did become very widely circulated down to the sixteenth century. Hugo's first work, which he lost, was called the "Samler," collector.\*

Besides these we may mention "King Tyrol von Schotten's advice to his son Friedebrant;"† and a similar work entitled "Winsbeke;" also a mother's advice to her daughter, "Winsbekin."‡ These poems are not in an epic but a lyric shape.

In addition to these there are several lyric didactic poems of the thirteenth century.

We thus arrive at the strictly lyrical or *Minne* poetry of this epoch, the manifold productions in which can only be briefly described.

Ancient heroic poetry, which sings the deeds of a

\* The "Renner" was printed in 1549, after a version of Seb. Brant's. The Historical Society of Bamberg published another, but not good, edition, 1833-34.

† "König Tyrol und sein Sohn Friedebrant" were originally subjects of an epic poem, of which only fragments survive; see J. Grimm, in Haupt's "Zeitschrift," i. p. 7. The didactic poem of "King Tyrol and his son Friedebrant" is in Schilter's "Thesaurus" (vol. ii.), and in Hagen's "Minnesinger," ii. 248.

‡ "Der Winsbeke und die Winsbekin"—poems which certainly did not originally belong to each other—are printed in Benecke's "Beiträge," ii. 455, and in Hagen's "Neues Jahrbuch," ii. 182. A special edition came out by M. Haupt in 1845. Add to these didactic poems the collection made by Sigfrid Helbing, an Austrian knight, about 1295-1298. It is a very useful contribution to the History of Manners, and is edited, with notes, by Karajan, in Haupt's "Zeitschrift," iv. 1-284.

whole people out of the mouth of a whole people, is always succeeded by a poetry, which is the expression, not of a nation's feelings, but of the feelings of an individual;\* a poetry which does not describe deeds but sensations and feelings, the joys and sorrows of an individual heart.

If these feelings are such as have moved the hearts of all, though they are described by one, then we have the popular lay (*Volkslied*). If they are the exclusive experience of a single person, then we have art-lyric or Minne-poetry, which was so universally cultivated in the spring-time of German song. Minne, as being the main subject of this sort of poetry, has given its name to it. It signifies the silent longing thought on the beloved one, sweet reminiscences of her, whose name the lover does not venture to pronounce. There is nothing of impurity about it; it is tender and profound, and essentially German.

One chief charm of this kind of poetry is its youthful simplicity and diffidence. When the maiden's gaze meets that of the lover, he casts his eyes down to the ground abashed. One friendly glance from the sweet face of his fair enslaver, and he is satisfied. It is only when the boys and girls meet in the merry Maytide, and foot it under the linden trees, that the bashful dreamer takes courage and joins his loved one in the dance. Her name we never find mentioned in all the numerous productions of the Minnesingers; although there can be no doubt that in each of these the heroine is not an imaginary, but a real personage.

\* Grimm, "*Alt-Deutscher Meistergesang*," p. 141.



Nay, the singer himself avoids coming too prominently before his readers. Thus *Walther* von der Vogelweide only covertly alludes to himself, by mentioning the lady Hildegund: this latter name calling to mind the well-known popular epic of *Walther* of Wasichenstein and Hildegund. The joys of Spring, and gladness of Summer; Autumn-sadness, and Winter-lament, which aptly mirror forth the vicissitudes in the singer's feelings, frequently form the commencement of his strain. This sympathy with the ever-changing scenes of nature, which is another mark of the juvenile emotions of Minne-poetry, has incurred the ridicule of the moderns. But it is totally distinct from the morbid sentimentality and affected love of nature of some of the poems of the last century which have been so admirably described in *Werther*.

Again, the tenderness and purity of woman's mind, and the devotedness of her affection, are touchingly and truly painted by these poets. Indeed, the very existence of this species of poetry is clearly attributable to the ennobling and soothing influence -- we may add the poetic influence -- which she exercised on the sterner sex. She formed, as it were, the ideal side of society. The homage which ever since that time has been paid by the Western nations of Christendom to the fair sex, *then* amounted to something like adoration; a feeling which had its origin alike in the courtly observances and strict notions of chivalry, and in the holy influences of Christianity. Never was the poet more under the inspiration of woman than in the last half of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century.

Of fickleness, inconstancy, jealousy, broken vows, Minne poetry knows nothing. Here, woman is hopeful and unalterably true; for she cannot be otherwise. To sum up all, Minne poetry may be pronounced an essentially feminine poetry.

Not so the poetry of the Troubadours, which was in a great measure its contemporary. *That* may be called an essentially masculine poetry; the poetry of a southern people, restless and ardent. Inconstancy, jealousy, separation, reconciliation amid doubts and reproaches, in short, all the vagaries of vehement, reckless passion, such are its features in contradistinction to the gentleness, the hopeful yearning, the modesty and reserve, of Minne-poetry. From this it is clear that the latter could never have been borrowed from the former. Minne-poetry is not Romantic, but entirely German. It is just possible that Germany caught the general inspiration for this sort of poetry from France: but this is all that can be affirmed.\*

Another prominent feature of this poetry is its rich melodiousness. It was meant, not to be read, but sung; sung to the sound of the zither or violin, for the most part by the poet himself; sometimes in the circle

\* The only instance of a German minnesinger borrowing features from the Romance poetry of the Troubadours is Rudolf, Count of Neuenburg. In the Weingarten MS. he is called Count of Fenis: to judge from which name, and his birth-place, Neufchâtel, he was himself half Romance. Bodmer, in 1763, showed that some of his strophes are imitated from the French singer, Folquet, of Marseilles. But this imitation does not go beyond a few individual pictures; as a whole, the German is widely different from the Romance original. See Hagen's "Minnesinger," iv. p. 50. Wackernagel's "Alt-französische Lieder und Leiche," 1846, p. 193.

of gentle ladies, among whom was the object of his passion; sometimes to the merry movement of the dance. So that all this poetry, in its copious ringing language, in its delicate intertwining of rhymes, in its lines of different lengths, in its abrupt pauses, and so forth, is from first to last nothing but music.

The Strophe is composed of two equal parts, followed and wound up by another of different length. The two former are called *Stollen*, the latter one *Abgesang*,—a threefold division of the strophe, which has been preserved to the present day. On the other hand, the number of lines, their length, and the arrangement of the rhymes, vary in almost every poem according to the will of the poets. Besides this tripartite strophe form, there was another form, which adapted itself entirely to the music; whereas in that just mentioned the music was adapted to the rhyme. This was the *Leich*, originally an ecclesiastical form of poem derived from the long-drawn modulations of the last syllable of Hallelujah, and hence, as used by the Church, called *Sequenz*. At the end of the twelfth century it was also employed for secular poems; and it is one of the most fascinating and lively, as well as most unfettered forms of Minne-poetry. The melody of the Italian language and poetry are often praised; but there is, perhaps, nothing more musical and melodious in the whole field of poetry than those strains which Heinrich von Risbach, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Walther von der Vogelweide, sang on the Wartburg at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Worldly love, however, is not the exclusive theme of the Minnesänger poetry. Impassioned strains of heavenly Minne, praises of the Virgin, fervid eulogies of the Crusades, pious reflections on the wisdom and works of the Creator, are also to be found in their productions. Some of them go a step further, and sing in earnest tones of the Emperor and his vassals, of the Pope, the Church, and the clergy, the customs and course of the age, and the vanity of sublunary things. And thus, in fact, they pass over into the domain of didactic poetry; specimens of which have been mentioned above in "King Tyrol," "Winsbeke," and "Winsbekin." Hence the poetry, as well as the life, of the knightly minstrels of the thirteenth century has been divided into Frauendienst, Herrendienst, and Gottesdienst, *i. e.* service to the ladies, to their masters, and to God.

By far the greatest part of these poets were of knightly rank. Their art was a courtly one, and they exercised it amid the higher circles, and under the roofs of princes and nobles. The people, on the contrary, took but little interest in it; what they loved most to hear were the old heroic songs, sung by blind strolling minstrels. In one respect, however, popular and Minne poetry were alike, they were neither of them committed to writing, but sung from memory, and handed down by oral tradition. Most of the minnesingers, even Wolfram von Eschenbach himself, could neither read nor write. Ulrich von Lichtenstein had to carry a billet-doux for weeks in his pocket before he could meet with somebody to decipher it. Many of these poets had a lad in their service (*singerlein*), to

whom they taught their pieces, and who at times went and sang them to the knight's lady-love. It was not till this art was on the wane that the verses of some of the singers were collected and written down. The best of these collections was made at Zurich, and was known under the name of the "Manessian MS." From thence it went to Heidelberg, and is now in the Library at Paris. It is full of beautiful miniatures of the knightly poets, together with the escutcheons of each. There is another collection of older date, which formerly belonged to the Monastery of Weingarten, and is now at Stuttgard. A third, called the "Heidelberg MS.," is likewise more ancient. Both of these have lately been printed, the former with its illustrations entire.

From a survey of the above collections, which manifestly contain only the best songs, and those which were most generally known, we may form some idea of the vast number of knightly singers (*Herren*) in those days. It is also evident that besides these there were, at a comparatively early period, *Meister*, people of the burgher classes, who followed the art. Among them we even meet with a Jew, Süsskind by name. The art would doubtless be subject to certain rules, and this would prepare the way for the *Meistergesang* of the following period.

Of the 160 Minnesingers, of whose songs specimens survive, we shall here briefly allude to a few.\*

\* The first edition of the "Minnesingers" was undertaken by Bodmer and Breitinger, after the Paris MS., in 1758-59. "Sammlung von Minnesingern aus dem Schwäbischen Zeitpuncte CXL. Dichter enthaltend; durch Ruedger Manessen, weiland des Rathes der uralten Zyrich."

With Heinrich von Veldekin, in the year 1184, not only knightly poetry generally, but Minne poetry also, reached its palmiest days. Contemporary with him—possibly even a little before him—were Von Kürenberg, Dietmar von Eist, and some others. These sang in a simpler strain, and for the most part in the Nibelungen-strophe; at times also in short minne-sentences, of one or two strophes. There is a firm and heroic carriage about their poetry, which makes the delicate and refined touches here and there interspersed all the more attractive. The falcon, with which the “Nibelungen-lied” opens, is a favourite image of theirs. Thus Kürenberg makes his lady-love sing—

“I brought up a falcon for longer than a year;  
 When I had tamed him just as I would,  
 And circled his plumage with gold,  
 Then he rose up aloft, and flew to other lands  
 Since then I have seen him fly all brilliant and fair;  
 He bears on his foot silken thongs,  
 And his feathers gleam all red like gold.  
 God bring those together that fain would pair.”

So Dietmar von Eist's love stands alone by the heath, and awaits her lover, when she espies a falcon on the wing, and sings:

“Good luck to thee, falcon, thou'rt off to thy love;  
 Thou hast chosen one tree in the wood,  
 And so I have done; my eyes chose one,

2 vols. 4. Supplement in Benecke's “Beiträge.” In 1840 appeared von der Hagen's “Minnesinger des 12, 13, 14 Jahrhunderts,” &c., 3 vols. 4. The last of which contains the biography of each poet. This laborious and comprehensive work is deficient in criticism. The Weingartner MS. was printed in 1843, and the Heidelberg MS. in 1844, both at the expense of the Literary Society at Stuttgart.



And for this they me envy, the beauteous dames ;  
 Can't they leave me alone with my joy ?  
 I don't long for any of their lovers."

Another time Kürenberg's love hears a voice singing, as she stands late one evening on the battlements. She cries,—

"That's the lay of the man who hence must go,  
 Or I can no longer resist him."

He answers :—

"Now bring me my steed, and bring me my mail,  
 I must out of the land for a lady's sake,  
 Who'll force me to adore her."

But the world must know nought of this, and he continues :—

"The even-star hides, and so do thou,  
 Fair lady, when thou dost behold me:  
 Turn thine eyes on another,  
 That none may know  
 What's passed between us two."

Another poet is Friederich von Hausen\*, a brave and valiant knight from the Rhine, who is so lost in the sweet remembrance of his love that he wished people "Good morning" when it was night. He told his love how she alone had taken his heart captive, but she won't believe him, until at last he took the cross and started for Palestine with Frederick the Red-beard. Hereupon she calls him her Æneas, in allusion to Veldekin's *Æneis*, which in those days was the mirror of

\* His "Minnelieder" are to be found in Hagen's "Minnesinger," i. 212. Concerning his life and death, see Lachmann, "Zum Iwein," 4431, second edition, p. 317; Haupt, "Die Lieder und Büchlein," p. xvi.; Hagen, "Minnesinger," iv. 150.

Minne all over Germany, but at the same time assures him she will never be his Dido. Having fastened the sacred emblem to his breast, the knight sings :—

“Body and heart desire to part,  
That lived so long a time together ;  
My body would fain against Pagans fight,  
But my heart loves a lady more than aught in the world.  
Full sad am I that thus they’ll sever.  
Her eyes have the mischief done,  
And God alone can the strife decide.  
Since I can’t quiet thee, my heart,  
Nor still thine inward sorrow,  
In God will I put my trust.  
I thought when I took the cross for the honour of God  
That I should get rid of my pain ;  
But my heart cares little what will become of me.  
How oft have I begg’d and pray’d her,  
But she would not understand.  
Transient her vows as the summer brief  
Of my joys, that I spent in Treves.”

And so the knight leaves her, whom he had besought in vain, but sends her many a warm greeting from beyond the sea. Sometimes he thinks of what he would say if he was near her, and this shortens the tedium of his journey. It was sad at home, but here it is three times more so, but he consoles himself with the thought that perhaps she will have a friendly recollection of him, “for he of all men was her most devoted admirer.” In the MS. we have a miniature of the singer, standing on ship-board, and casting a leaf into the sea for the rolling waves to carry to the distant home of his love, the home of his heart. Friederich von Hausen never returned. After a valiant fight and glorious victory, he fell nobly before the walls of Philomelium, in Asia

Minor, not many days before his master, the Emperor, on the Monday after Ascension 1190, lamented by the whole army.

Another of these poets was one Spervogel, whose religious pieces at times verge on the sublime:—

“ ‘The herbs of the wood,’ he sings, ‘and the golden ore,  
And the depths of the world are known to God ;  
They are all in Thine hand, and the heavenly Hosts  
Can never sufficiently praise Thee.’ ”

Again—

“ He is mighty and strong, who was born at Christmas tide,  
Jesus the Holy, the theme of universal praise.  
They that in darkness dwell,  
And praise not Jesus, the Saviour,  
On them the sun does not shine,  
Nor the moon, nor the radiant stars.  
In Heaven’s a house, and a golden way leads thereto ;  
It rests upon marble pillars, and shines with precious stones.  
None may enter in but such as are free from sin.”

But many of these old writers of sacred poetry indulged in lighter effusions. Thus, Wernher von Tegernsee, the author of a life of the Virgin, could write in this strain:—

“ Thou art mine, and I am thine ; be of this assured ;  
Locked up art thou in my heart, and the key is lost ;  
Ever must thou there remain.”

Lines which we should be inclined rather to attribute to a Tyrolese minstrel of our time than to a grave monk of the year 1173.

Gottfried von Strassburg wrote a beautiful hymn, ninety-four strophes long, in honour of the Virgin, which begins thus:—“ Thou rose-blossom, thou lily-

leaf, thou Queen of lofty estate, such as none hath reached but thou ; thou hearts-ease for every pain, thou joy in sorrow, to thee be sung praise and honour."\*

There are likewise some remarkably pretty songs by Wolfram von Eschenbach, where the watchman on the battlements announces the coming day, and warns the lovers that it is time to separate. This form of poem (*Wächterlied*) soon became very popular, and was converted into a spiritual song. The latest of these sacred songs is the well-known one by Philip Nicolai, "Wake up, cries the voice." In like manner, Hartmann von der Aue is not only a narrative poet, but also one of the best of the Minnesingers.

Walther von der Vogelweide, on the other hand, was purely a Minnesinger (unless he be the author of "*Freidank*"), and indeed one of the best of them, if not the very best. Some of his songs breathe nothing but gentleness and affection ; some are jocund beyond measure, while in others he sings, in deep and solemn tones, not only the praises of God and the Virgin, but also the transitoriness of worldly things, the honour of the German people, the duties and dignities of the Emperor, the obligations of his subjects, the rights of the Pope, and the grandeur of that true Church which does not strain after temporal power. In fact, he spoke out the truth with calm simplicity, giving expression to the sentiments of the noblest and best part of the German nation. Walther's earliest productions date from about 1190, if not earlier. His

\* This panegyric is printed complete, and with critical care, in Haupt's "*Zeitschrift*," iv. 513-555.

"Minnelieder" are of this period. On the death of the Emperor Heinrich VI., in 1197, he turned his attention more to public matters. After this he was twice at the Thuringian Court, first in the time of the Landgrave Hermann, and secondly in that of the Landgrave Ludwig, the husband of St. Elizabeth. His last poems were most probably composed in the year 1228, when Frederick II. was preparing for his Crusade, in which expedition he must have been personally present, if he be the same person as the author of "Freidank." He must have been of an unusually vigorous and active frame, as at this period he was over sixty.

Walther's poems have been admirably translated into modern German by Simrock, the editor of the "Nibelungen" and "Parcival," with explanations by Wackernagel. Uhland also wrote an excellent description of his poetry. The most celebrated of Walther's "Minnelieder" is his "Praise of Women" (Lob der Frauen):

"Durchsüßet und geblümet sind die reinen Frauen ;  
 Es gab niemals so wonnigliches anzuschauen.  
 In Luftē noch auf Erden noch in allengrünen Auen.  
 Lilien und der Rosen Blumen, wo die leuchten  
 Im Maienthaue durch das Gras, und kleiner Vögel Sang,  
 Sind gegen diese Wonne ohne Farb und Klang,  
 So man sieht schöne Frauen.  
 Das kann den trüben Mut erquicken,  
 Und löschet alles Trauern an derselbe Stund,  
 Wenn lieblich lacht in Lieb ihr süßer rother Mund,  
 Und Pfeil' aus spiel'nden Augen schiessen ins Mannes Herzens Grund."

Thoroughly sweet and blooming are the pure women ;  
 Never was there aught so enchanting to behold,  
 In the air or on the earth or in the verdant meadows.  
 The lilies and the roses, when they gleam  
 With May-dew through the grass ; the song of tiny birds,

Are, compared with this delight, rest of sound and colour,  
 Provided that we see beauteous women.  
 This can the gloomy mood both quicken,  
 And extinguish sadness; the selfsame hour  
 When their sweet red mouth so loving smiles,  
 And shafts from their playful eyes pierce into the bottom of man's  
 heart.

Not less renowned is one of his political poems :

“Ich sass auf einem Steine,”  
*etc.*

Here, after passing a sharp censure on the contest for the imperial throne, and the political intrigues of the Court of Rome, he complains, in tones of deep sadness, of the transitoriness of all that had contributed to render his own life dear to him and happy.

“O weh, wohin geschwunden sind alle meine Jahr,”  
*etc.*

Walther died at Wurzburg, and lies buried under a tree in the Minster Garden. He bequeathed a sum to purchase bread for his friends the birds; and for a number of years they were regularly fed upon his grave-stone, where he had caused four holes to be made for the purpose. At last, in the fifteenth century, the greedy monks appropriated the dole to themselves. But it was only in modern times that the tomb was destroyed.\*

\* Walther's poems have been twice published, with explanation by Lachmann, viz. in 1827 and 1843 (third edition superintended by Haupt, 1853). Compare Uhland, “Walther von der Vogelweide,” 1821, and “Gedichte Walthers, &c., übersetzt von K. Simrock und Wilhelm Wackernagel, 1833.” See Walther's Life, in Hagen's “Minnesinger,” iv. p. 160. One of the most important events in his life was discovered and cleared up by Karajan, in “Ueber zwei Gedichte Walthers,” &c., Wien, 1851.



Another Minnesinger was Ulrich von Liechtenstein, the ancestor of the princely Austrian house of that name, who has left us a perfect account of his three-and-thirty years' experiences as a poet and knight. This work, entitled "*Frauendienst*" (Service of the Ladies), has been edited by Tieck. Here we see the transition of poetry into reality,—the mixing up of the pure ideal with the incidents of common life,—a realisation, in fact, of the poetry of Gottfried von Strasburg,—all which denotes the approaching decay of this sort of poetry. The whole is composed with much *naïveté* and ease. Numerous love-songs are interspersed, not to mention love-letters (*Büchlein*), of which we have many specimens dating from that period, some by Hartmann.

Whilst still a boy, Ulrich had heard sung that nobody could ever attain to honour unless he was ready to be the faithful servant of the fair sex, and loved as his own soul some good and virtuous damsel. This was a part of a true knight's duties. And such good heed did he take of this lesson, that on becoming, at the age of twelve (about 1211), the page of a noble lady (probably a princess of Meran), he at once fell in love with his mistress. When he brought her flowers, he rejoiced that her white fingers touched what had been touched by his own; nay, he would drink the water that had been poured over her delicate hands. After learning the knightly arts of tilting and tourney, he is dubbed a knight. One of his female friends, learning the secret of his passion, offers to mediate between the two.

The princess listens to his addresses, but only in a Platonic sense. One of her objections to him is, that he has an ugly mouth—an objection not ill-founded, for he has three lips instead of two. On hearing this, he rides off to a doctor in Styria, who cuts off the swelling which bore the appearance of a third lip. He submits to the operation without flinching. On his recovery, the lady consents to an interview, but merely in order to see how his lip looks. The way in which he describes his own bashfulness, and how, when his heart bid him speak, his courage failed him, and how the lady, to punish him, plucks a lock of hair from his head just when he is helping her to dismount, are all told in the simplest and liveliest style imaginable.

In one of the many encounters that he braved in honour of his mistress, the little finger of his right hand was left hanging by a bit of skin. The lady hearing that he had lost his finger in her service, expresses her sorrow for him. But being subsequently informed that the finger was still on his hand, she accuses him of falsehood. On this he gets a friend to cut off the digit in question, which had already begun to heal, and sends it to the princess in a case of green velvet with a lid of gold, accompanied by a love-letter. But the hopes of the fantastic knight are doomed to disappointment. The lady will have nothing to do with him. Upon this he dresses himself up as the Lady Minne or Venus, and with a quantity of attendants in costly attire parades through Austria, bringing together a vast concourse wherever he goes. For Lady Minne, as she was called, travelled about to

prove the valour of the knights in the tournament, and distributed golden rings to all who broke a lance with her; which rings had the power of gaining and retaining a lady's love. All this took place solely in honour of a lady who was already married; the poet himself being also, as he ingenuously informs us, in a similar predicament, and the father of a family of children. Here, then, we have a foreign Tristan or Lancelot in German reality. But his love was no Isolde or Ginevra. The lady's pure mind and firm resolve were proof against his attacks. Pretending to listen to his suit, she admits him through the window of her chamber. But he is instantaneously pitched out again in a most ludicrous manner, rolling down the wall, with the loose stones rolling after him, and by his cries alarming the warders, who cross themselves, thinking it is the foul fiend himself bundling out of the castle. This notable event took place in the night of the 14th of June 1227. The lover's ardour is by no means cooled by this reception. He becomes desperate, wants to drown himself, and begins singing and love-letter writing as much as ever. The lady\* urges him to go to the Crusades and forget her; but he is much too love-sick to make the attempt. For four years longer he continues to persecute her, until at last she serves him a trick more degrading than before; so degrading, in fact, that he does not venture to narrate it. Cured at length of this folly, he com-

\* Frau. This word, which now signifies woman, or wife, then meant the adored mistress of the heart; while weib, or gemahel, was the term for woman in her more prosaic relation of wife.

mences writing doleful ditties and lampoons on faithless women. Presently, however, he selects another mistress, and to do her honour rides about the country with a magnificent retinue, in the character of King Artus. His attendants he names Gawein, Lancelot, Iwein, Kalogreant, &c. And all this strange stuff is told us by a man of six-and-fifty, who narrates the pranks of twenty or thirty years ago as if he had only just played them. Whether he ever sobered down is very doubtful. Time enough he certainly had to do so, for he lived to the age of seventy-six.\* At any rate, we learn from this poem what an influence the British romances, "Tristan" especially, must have had; and it thus also becomes comprehensible how the word *Minne*, even so early as the fourteenth century, came to bear an impure signification; and in the fifteenth was considered too bad to pass the lips. At last, after three hundred years had passed away, it reappeared in its ancient purity and dignity.

In the numerous poems of Sir Nithart we have another unpleasant side of the *Minne*-song. This poet, who was a Bavarian by birth, and whose tomb is still to be seen in the church of St. Stephen, at Vienna, lived about the same time as Ulrich. Like the rest of his brother poets, he begins with descriptions of nature, praises of spring and the flowers; he then passes into praises of the fair; but soon after most of his pieces

\* "Ulrich von Lichtenstein, mit Anmerkungen von T. von Karajan," ed. Lachmann, 1841. In Lachmann's edition is also Ulrich's "*Frauenbuch*." Ulrich wrote the "*Frauendienst*," 1255; the "*Frauenbuch*," 1257. He was born probably 1199 (1200), and died 1274 or 1276. See his life in Hagen, iv. p. 321.

degenerate into descriptions of the peasant life of those days, and how they aped the knights in dress and armour. (The word *dörper*, applied by Nithart to these simple villagers, is the original of the modern *Tölpel*, clown.) Nithart's best descriptions are those of the peasant dances, and the horse-play they and he practised upon each other. Instead, therefore of depicting the gentle emotions and inward fancies of love, he descends more to vulgar realities, which become interesting by the happy humour with which he describes them. The measure of these poems is uncommonly lively, just suited to the bouncing dance and riotous mirth of a village festival. The descriptions are full of vigour, and at times approach the genuine popular tone, while words are used which the polished language of the day rejected as obsolete. Nevertheless, Nithart's poetry was by no means intended for the masses, but rather for the edification of the higher circles at the expense of the peasants; in short, he forms the link connecting the courtly *Minne-song* with comedy and popular poetry. For centuries his works were famous, and were printed till late in the sixteenth century. His pranks among the peasants elevated him into a sort of mythical personage, under the name of *Bauernfeind*. By some he became confused with the merry priest of *Kalenberg*, who lived a century later, and by others he was called a second *Eulenspiegel*. Upon the whole, he may be placed by the side of *Amis* and *Morolf*, as the representative of comedy and satire in the period we are describing.\*

\* Nithart's life (by Wackernagel) is in *Hagen*, iv. p. 435. His poems, *ibid.* ii. 98., iii. 183., 468*d*-468*g*. But many of these are not

Heinrich von Meissen, called "Frauenlob," is an instance among the Minnesingers of those peculiar defects which, as in the case of Konrad von Würzburg, marked a decline in poetical taste. Complaints of not being sufficiently appreciated by his contemporaries; parade of learning; introduction of all sorts of heterogeneous characters into his pieces—such as King Arthur and Ahasuerus, Solomon and Sampson, Aristotle and Sigfrid; great artificiality of form and metre: such are some of his characteristics. One of his measures, his *zarter Ton*, has no less than twenty-one rhymes in a strophe, while another, his *überzarter*, has as many as thirty-four. His *Leich* on the Holy Virgin is an extraordinary combination of scholastic erudition and metrical artifice.

Like most of the later Minnesingers, he was not a knight, nor yet a doctor of theology, as tradition relates, but a strolling minstrel of the middle class. He was called "Frauenlob" from the praises bestowed by him on the women, among whom he stood in great repute. The latter part of his life he resided at Mayence, where he founded the school of Mastersingers. On his death in 1318, his body was carried to the grave by the weeping women of Mayence, who,

his. Nithart is cited (almost proverbially) by W. von Eschenbach, in "Willehalm," 212, 12–13. He lived at the court of Frederick "der Streitbar" of Austria, who died 1246. But Nithart was not then living, because he is spoken of as dead in Wernher's "Meier Helmbrecht" (see note, p. 176), which was written in the lifetime of Frederick.

Der Neidhart Fuchs, who, according to several chroniclers in the fourteenth century, lived at the Austrian court, under Otto the Jovial, and is said to have played similar pranks with the peasants, can only be indebted for his existence to a confusion of persons or names.



with loud lamentations, poured so much wine upon his grave that the whole church swam with it.\*

The piece still extant, under the title of the "Sän-gerkrieg auf der Wartburg" (the Contest of the Singers on the Wartburg), is written chiefly in this learned and artificial manner. It is possible that such a contest actually did take place on the Wartburg in the year 1206 or 1207, the year when St. Elizabeth was born. But the circumstances under which it arose are unquestionably imaginary, and seem to have been a kind of mournful reminiscence of times gone by, when poetry stood in high estimation. The first part could not have been written earlier than the first half of the thirteenth century. The second part, when the mythical Klingsohr of Hungary makes his appearance, and has a contest of wit with Wolfram of Eschenbach, is of much later date.†

It now remains for us only to advert briefly to the prose productions of this first classical period of German literature; if such can be said to have existed at a period when the life of the people was instinct with poetry. The very law-books of that day, the Schwabenspiegel, the Sachsenspiegel, and others, breathe the poetical spirit of the time. Still more so is this the case with the productions of eloquence,—the sermons. What softness and flexibility of language, what poetical

\* "Heinrich von Meissen des Frauenlobs Leiche, Sprüche, Streitgedichte und Lieder," &c. Ettmüller, 1843.

† The "Sän-gerkrieg" is in Hagen, ii. p. 2. *seq.* Compare J. Grimm, "Über den altd. Meistergesang," p. 77.; Koberstein, "Über das Alter, &c. des Gedichts von Wartburger Kriege," 1823; Lucas, "Über den Krieg von Wartburg," 1838.

sublimity joined with earnest teaching, what delicacy and force combined; how affectionate and cheerful, and yet how strict! It is the outpouring of a heart filled with the importance and truth of the subject,—of a speaker who will not stoop to ornament to give effect to his message.

These sermons, in fact, of the twelfth and thirteenth century, of which a tolerable quantity is still extant, might well serve as models of pulpit eloquence at the present day. In those times, monks of the Mendicant order wandered about Germany, full of genuine national feeling, and sympathizing with the ignorant multitude, to whom neither Benedictine nor Secular cared to preach. Thousands would flock to listen to their words, at one time in the cathedral or in the pulpit outside of it, at another on the mountain side or under the green linden tree. Berthold, the Franciscan monk of Regensburg, a native of Winterthur in Switzerland, was one of these preachers. Vast crowds followed him about the country; and it is said that sometimes his audience numbered as many as twenty thousand. Many of his sermons are still extant; a glance at which will be sufficient to show the secret of his great popularity.\*

\* Berthold died 1272. Eleven of his sermons were published by Ch. Kling, 1824. Compare J. Grimm's "Recension, Wiener Jarbücher," 1825, vol. xxxii. He was a pupil of the Minorite, Brother David, who, besides numerous works in Latin, has left German ascetic treatises, printed in Pfeiffer's "Deutsche Mystiker, des 14 Jarh." 1845, 1 vol. pp. 309 and 375. Other sermons have been published in a separate form by Leyser, 1838; Roth, 1839; Grieshaber, 1844 and 1846; also in collections, as Graff's "Diutiska," Hoffmann's "Fundgruben," Mone's "Anzlinger."

The period to which we shall now turn, viz., from the beginning of the fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century, exhibits an utter decay of all those great qualities that distinguished the poetry of the thirteenth century. We now enter upon a poetical wilderness, with only a few solitary oases in it to arrest our course.

With the fall of the Hohenstaufens the political condition of Germany altered. Rudolf of Hapsburg studied his own interests more than those of the empire, and was less solicitous for the honour of Germany than for the aggrandisement of his own family. And so it was, that when the Minnesingers hastened to the Imperial court, hoping great things for poetry from the newly-elected Rudolf, they were bitterly disappointed. That generous patronage under which letters flourished during the Hohenstaufen dynasty, was withheld by the house of Hapsburg. Rudolf wished to have Austria and her love, but not Austria's love-songs. The minstrels who sought his court went away poor and neglected; and their poems are full of sad complainings at their lot. And as it was with the Emperor, so it was with the other princes of the land. Busied in the fruitless conflict of parties, they had no leisure for song, and so the singers, from the absence of listeners, became mute. As time progressed, things grew worse. Rudolf's successors were actuated by the same spirit. The impulses which had been awakened by the Crusades gradually died out; the eye of the nobility no longer dwelt upon some grand and distant object; ideal aspirations no longer warmed their bosom; and, instead, they became infected with a cold, narrow egotism.

Endless feuds and contentions ensued in consequence; the law of might prevailed, — a state of things which continued from the middle of the fourteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century, and which the temporal power failed to put an end to. If to this be added the dreadful scourges of plague and famine which visited Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century, and threw Germany into an agony of alarm, we shall cease to wonder that poetry vanished. In such times there was no place for it. In the fifteenth century the prospect was still gloomier. For not only had politics degenerated into a nonentity, but it was the same with the Church and with morals. The feud between the Emperor, Lewis the Bavarian, and the Pope, who placed Germany under an interdict, shook the people's religious belief to its centre.

Forgetful of their sacred calling, the clergy went beyond the laity in sensuality and egotism, and so lost the control which they formerly possessed over the rude manners and barbarous tendencies of the age. The two pillars of German poetry, Truthfulness and Christian faith, tottered; and with them the graceful structure that had been raised upon them. Architecture and painting, it is true, flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and afford us a mournful solace for the loss of their parents, the manly Heroic song and lovely Minne poetry of bygone days.

There were other causes contributing to the decay of poetry. As the power of the Emperor and the nobles diminished, the towns rose into importance with

their trade and manufactures; but trade and manufactures have never been congenial to poetry.

Again, that tendency to inventions and discoveries, and the mastery of the powers of nature, which first made its appearance in the fourteenth century, and which is in fact the distinguishing mark of that and the succeeding century, was anything but favourable to poetry. Poetry lost rather than gained by the discovery of new worlds by the invention of the compass, of gunpowder, of watches, nay, even by that of printing. At the close of the fifteenth century, when material activity was at its zenith, poetry was at the lowest ebb.

Indeed, those periods of the world's history, in which the mind of man has been wholly and successfully bent on the subjugation of nature's powers, and on the development and application of the exact sciences, have never been morally or poetically great. Before printing was invented, a poet's works passed current only among an initiated few; kindred spirits, in fact, who took an interest in such matters; they never fell into the hands of the profane crowd who cared for none of those things.

But with the invention of printing all was altered. The poet had no longer before him distinct persons, living faces, so to say, looking on him, respect for whom would make him careful what he wrote and what he recited. His critics *now* were a heterogeneous, indistinct mass, called the public, of whom he knew little, and for whom he cared less. This contempt for his readers lasted till late in the sixteenth century. No wonder that under such circumstances the number of

base mechanical poetasters, miscalled poets, became incredible.

From that time to the present, poetry became a mere matter for the eye, something to be read; whilst, before the days of printing, it was an affair of song and recitation,—a poetry instinct with life, and worthy of the name. The world would never have had its “*Iliad*,” its “*Odyssey*,” and its “*Nibelungenlied*,” had the then race of men been acquainted with printing. Under the empire of the press, poetry ceased to have a tradition; and exactly in proportion as that empire extended, German heroic poetry declined; and it is not a little singular that the only genuine poetry of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was in the possession of persons who could neither read nor write. We allude to the *Volkslied*, or national song.

Printing chiefly served the purposes of learning only; and it is learning that we must number among the enemies of poetry after the fourteenth century. We have seen her threatening in the thirteenth century; working prejudicially in the fourteenth; and now in the fifteenth, she becomes poetry’s deadly foe. This hostility was kept up unflinching even down to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and it was only in the second classical period of German poetry that she was repulsed, though by no means vanquished. The wounds she inflicted are not even now scarred over.

That subtle invention of the mixed Romance peoples which was cultivated with such surprising acuteness,—we mean the Scholastic Philosophy,—began to be known and represented in Germany as early as the thirteenth



century. Early in the fourteenth it took up its quarters in Prague, and then in Heidelberg, and a century later in Leipsic. Knowledge began to preponderate over living experience, to an extent which augured little good. A separation was the quick result, not such as that between the various grades of society, or between clergy and laity, but the separation between the men of knowledge and those who knew nothing. The former, in accordance with the proverb, "Knowledge puffeth up," despised the latter, and holding them to be unworthy of their own lofty position, and incapable of attaining to it, left them to the deepest barbarism. All poetry that did not suit their peculiar theories of wisdom, they ignored. Hence it is that in this period, especially the former half of it, two sorts of poetry are met with : one artificial, erudite, subtle, and stilted, such as we indicated in the case of *Frauenlob* ; the other rude, uncouth, and clumsy. The former was in the service of the wise, the latter of the unwise. But wisdom soared so rapidly, that the first of these was left altogether in the lurch, and the last alone survived. This, in so far as it treated of national subjects, belonged to the old heroic poetry, and was, in fact, a continuation of it, and, as such, was regarded by the men of wisdom as mere stuff and nonsense.

Indeed, the chief characteristic of the poetry of this age may be pronounced an endeavour to return to the old national tone. In the fifteenth century, when, from the causes just mentioned, poetry had fallen deeply enough, the revival of letters, as it is called, took place ; that is to say, people were made acquainted

with the original Greek and Roman classics. Placed side by side with these, the German poetry of the day cut a sorrier figure than ever, and national poetry, national spirit, and independence became at a total discount. Nothing would now go down with the reading and writing world but Latin poetry. The learned actually grew ashamed of their mother tongue, and with much simplicity acknowledged that they were mere benighted barbarians till the light of Greek and Latin poetry rose upon their view. The ancient grandeur of the German empire and its head, the ancient grandeur of German poetry, were forgotten as though they had never been. Philological poetry now seized upon the vacant throne, and with its fine phrases ruled the world for full 300 years.

Of the advantage which German poetry derived from philological research, we shall speak hereafter.

So much for German poetry's external foes. Its enemies within next claim our attention. It will be necessary here to go back a little. We have seen that early in the thirteenth century, when German poetry was in full bloom, its noblest and most gifted votaries did not select the noblest themes to descant upon. Instead of bringing the light of their genius to bear on the immortal materials of national epic, they frittered away their powers on foreign and trivial subjects. The heroic sagas of their country they pass by with neglect, if not contempt, not foreseeing the retribution which would necessarily follow. That tendency of the inferior poets of the thirteenth century to prefer form to substance, art to nature, plainly indicated how things

would end. The love of highly-coloured descriptions which characterised the poets of that day, was a sure sign of impending decline. The tints, from being bright, presently become glaring; and so, by an easy transition, in place of the exquisite and delicate handling which we so admired in Wolfram, Hartmann, and Gottfried, we pass into the most coarse and vulgar common-place. The original expressions of earlier poets, in them so natural and so becoming, by degrees grew into phrases, until at last, when the decline of poetry fairly set in, these became in the mouths of their successors unmeaning nonsense. Just in the same way the poetasters of some years ago bandied about the glowing words of Schiller and Göthe, not knowing what they were talking about; and the pseudo-patriotic writers between 1838 and 1848 degraded the cries of freedom of 1813 and 1814 into meaningless phraseology. Again, the noble and melodious dialect, which at the beginning of the thirteenth century had grown into the common language of the educated classes, in the two succeeding centuries became debased, and ceased to be the exclusive vehicle of poetry, which adopted first one dialect, then another, at will. It is true that all the poets of the period now under consideration do not share equally in the defects above mentioned. There is a great difference between those of the fourteenth and those of the fifteenth century; indeed, the latter are so universally defective, that they deserve the name of clumsy rhymers rather than of poets. In the latter century, the accentuation of the words, which in the thirteenth century was so

exceedingly fine and subtle, began to waver; while in the metre we meet not unfrequently with a foot too much or too little. Add to which, the old rule of distributing the sense over two verses is lost sight of; and after the fourteenth century almost every line completes a sentence; so that the pairs of rhymes, which sounded so musically in the mouths of Hartmann, Gottfried, and Wolfram, become wearisome and monotonous.

The prose works, however, of the fifteenth century, when poetry had sunk as deeply as it well could do, have something very hearty and attractive about them. The language is sonorous, and the sentences smooth and rounded,—qualities which the sixteenth century, so fertile in prose, might well envy

And now for a brief survey of the poetical productions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The old national epic still continues in the minds and mouths of the people throughout the whole of this period. Versions appeared of the “*Ravenna Schlacht*,” the “*Rosengarten*,” “*König Laurin*,” and other Sagas belonging to the Dietrich of Bern group. But in these we miss the firm connected shape of the original, and the descriptions are disjointed and confused. In one single point, however, progress is visible, we mean the versification. The old long lines of the Nibelungen strophe, which could only coexist with the ancient language, now became a strophe of eight short lines which rhymed alternately; the uneven lines with double rhymes, the even with single rhymes as heretofore.

At the same time the fourth foot in the second half of what was formerly the fourth long line was now done away with in its equivalent, the eighth short line; so that all the lines of the strophe now had an equal number of feet. This form, which became the prevailing one in the fifteenth century, was originally called Hildebrandston, from the Hildebrandslied, which had continued to be the people's chief favourite; and all the most popular songs of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were written in it. Subsequently, this strophe went by other appellations, *e. g.* the Benzenauer Ton, from a song hereafter to be mentioned; "Herzlich thut mich erfreuen," from another song beginning with the above words; "Wilhelm von Nassau," and so forth. This harmonious strophe has continued for centuries to be the people's favourite, and is still used by the German ballad singers of the present day. Protestant hymns, *e. g.* that still sung in German churches "Befiehl du deine Wege," are also in the same shape. Nay, in many modern art-poems this old strophe is adopted, *e. g.* in "Frisch auf zum fröhlichen Jagen;" "Dir folgen meine Thränen;" and others.

In this strophe, then, there appeared, during the first half of the fifteenth century, versions of such second-rate poems as "Otnit," "Hug-" and "Wolf-dietrich," and "Rosengarten;" not of the Nibelungenlied; that was a cut above the degenerate tastes of the age. In these versions much of the beauty of the original is sacrificed to the rhyme; but notwithstanding many defects, they are, upon the whole, not displeasing: lively and fresh they certainly are. To these three poems was added

another, viz. "König Laurin;" and these four together were called the "Heldenbuch." This was twice printed in the fifteenth century, and several times in the sixteenth\*, and serves to keep alive some remembrance of the old heroic poetry till the end of that century, until at last, in the seventeenth century, the "Heldenbuch" also fell into contempt and oblivion, and the great days of old were utterly forgotten.

About the year 1472, these subjects, viz. "Otnit," "Wolf-dietrich," "Rosengarten," with several other Sagas belonging to the Etzel and Dietrich group, were elaborated afresh by Kaspar von der Roen†, of Münnerstadt; and this version was also called by its editor, Von der Hagen, the "Heldenbuch."‡

This second version is a most lamentable affair, and tasteless beyond conception. All that is good and genuine and poetical in the old poems, the author has struck out as though on purpose. Indeed he plumes himself on having eliminated "much useless talk." By only one of his contemporaries, presently to be mentioned, is this Caspar surpassed.

As for the art epic, the old poems of Charlemagne are now almost forgotten.

The later poems, "Heimonskinder," "Ogier von

\* The oldest edition of the "Heldenbuch" does not give the place and the date of the publication; the second is 1491; others, 1509, 1545, 1560, 1590.

† He was most likely a bänkelsänger, or ballad-singer, so called because these people mounted on bänke (benches) to recite their compositions.

‡ Kaspar von der Roen's version of the "Heldensagas," much of which is taken from originals now lost, is printed in Hagen and Priem's "Heldenbuch," in the original language, 1820 and 1825.



Dänemark," "Malagis der Zauberer," "Valentin und Namelos," &c., were now imported from the Netherlands, and appeared in mere translations. Of the Alexander Saga wretched versions continued to appear. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the notable discovery was made that Wolfram had omitted many most important adventures of Parcival's in the Grail-Saga; and accordingly, in 1336, one Von Rapolstein caused a translation to be made of these additions from the French work of Menessier, and interpolated them in Wolfram's "Parcival."\*

But this is nothing to the doings of Ulrich Füterer, or Fürterer, a Bavarian poet, by trade a heraldic painter, who in the year 1478, produced a kind of cyclic poem, containing all the separate Sagas of the Artus group connected together, and written in the Titurel-strophe. This monstrosity was never printed. It is only a proof of the poetical degeneracy of the age, that an uncouth rhymster should have ventured to produce a couple of folios of absurdities, written in that ingenious metre which none but its inventor, that deep-thinker and dexterous master of language, Wolfram von Eschenbach, knew how to manage. The prose versions of "Tristan and Isolt," dating 1470-1480, are of a better stamp.

The old legendary poetry still continued to be cultivated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and in the early part of the former century with success. Such, for instance, was a grand *Passionale*

\* On the version of "Parcival," at the instance of M. von Rapolstein, see A. Keller, *Römvart*, 1844, p. 647.

(passion-poem), containing an account of our Saviour and the Virgin, and also of the Apostles, and some later saints.\* Another piece, "Littower," gives the history of the conversion of a heathen king. It was written by one Schondoch, a poet not otherwise known. This legend, which is also told of the Saxon Wittekind, relates how that the pagan, in the disguise of a beggar, stole into a church meditating evil against the Christian monarch and his religion, when suddenly, from the uplifted Host, issues a child of wonderful beauty, and comes towards him unseen by all the rest. He is then seized, and led into the presence of the Christian king; his heart is moved, he receives the rite of baptism with his followers, and humbles himself before the Lord of Heaven. All this is told with much grace and simplicity.†

In the second half, however, of the fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth century, the verse-legends fall off considerably, and become coarse and exaggerated in the extreme. Such was Hermann of Sachsenheim's "Golden Temple," an imitation of Conrad of Wurzburg's "Golden Smith." In the "Travels of Saint

\* "Das alte Passional," ed. K. Hahn, 1845. Here, however, are wanting, besides several legends of the Madonna, the whole of the third book. Compare "Marienlegenden," Stuttgart, 1846, ed. Pfeiffer. The third book was published in 1852 by F. Köpke, "Das Passional, &c. des 13 Jahrhunderts." The first book contains the legends of "Jesus and Maria;" the second, those of the "Apostles;" the third, those of the "Saints," arranged according to the calendar. The work contains at least 100,000 verses.

† If this work belongs to the thirteenth century, which Vilmar now thinks, it will come above, p. 156.

† An edition for private circulation was prepared in 1826 by Joseph von Lassberg.

Brandanus" we have a heap of all sorts of wonderful adventures, most likely taken from some older compositions which have been lost.\* To obtain a fair notion of the vast difference between the legends of the close of the thirteenth century (and that was not the best period) and those of the fifteenth, we need only compare the old poem of S. Elizabeth with the miserable rhymings of Johann Rothe in 1430, although the last is much the best known of the two.† After this, legendary poetry passes into legendary prose.

It may here be stated parenthetically, that "Reineke Vos," already mentioned, is by far the best of all the extant narrative poems of the fifteenth century. This period is very rich in tales, not based on the great saga-groups, but on modern or historical occurrences; the more out-of-the-way and strange, and the more distorted and overlaid with a tissue of extraneous legend, the better. Allegory was next taken up—a sure sign of a declining poetry. It would profit little to enter at length into a description of these works. Such were

\* Brandanus, an Irish bishop, is said to have died in 577. The story of his adventures must be of Irish origin; it has obtained a wide circulation. Even in the "Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg" (Minnesinger, ii. Str. 46 and 56) reference is made to these legends. There is a High-German poetical version, still unprinted. A Low-German version, perhaps of the fourteenth century, taken from the Dutch, is to be found in Brun's "Romantische und andere Gedichte in altplatt-deutscher Sprache," 1798, p. 159. In the fifteenth century, the travels of S. Brandanus seem to have been particularly popular, as a quantity of editions appeared of the story, but in a prose shape.

† Johannes Rothe's "Leben der heil. Elizabet" is in Menken, "Script. rer. Germ." ii., but printed from the worst manuscript existing. The prologue, wherein the author mentions himself, is in "Bragur," vi. 2, p. 140.

the version of the old Oriental saga of "Apollonius of Tyre," written at the beginning of the fifteenth century by one Heinrich von der Neustadt, of Vienna\*, or "Duke William of Austria,"† a work written at the beginning of the fourteenth century; "Friedrich von Schwaben,"‡ and others. The "Seven Wise Masters" is an Indian story, first translated from Indian into Arabic; from that language into Greek, from Greek into Latin, from Latin into French, and thence into German rhymes, by Hans Böheler, one of the better poets of the commencement of the fifteenth century, and still current in a prose shape.§ Some of these productions, however,

\* The Greek story of Apollonius of Tyre, which was widely circulated, and of which there was even a prose version in Anglo-Saxon (ed. Thorpe, 1834), was known also in Germany as early as the twelfth century, for in Lamprecht's "Alexander" it is referred to, in the account of the destruction of Tyre. The rhyme version by Heinrich von (Wienerisch) Neustadt still remains unprinted. A prose version, composed by Heinrich Steinhöfel, of Weil, after Gotfrid of Viterbo, was published in 1471. Compare "Wiener Jarb.," 1823, vol. 22. p. 62.

† The poem of "William and his Beautiful Agleie" was written in 1314 by Johann von Würzburg. It is extant in several MSS., but has never been printed. It was published in a prose form in 1481, and has also been dramatised by Hans Sachs.

‡ Extracts of this poem, which belongs, at the earliest, to the end of the fourteenth century, are in "Bragur," vi. 1. p. 181., 2. 190., vii. 1. p. 209. It is a story reminding one of the Celtic poems, with a number of adventures invented or borrowed from earlier sources. One of the best passages is taken from the old German Heldensage of "Wieland der Schmid." Compare W. Grimm, "Deutsche Heldensage," p. 401.

§ The version of this poem by Böheler, who lived at the court of the Archbishop of Cologne, was edited by A. Keller, with a learned preface, in 1841. "Diocletianus leben, von H. v. Böheler." There was in existence another rhymed version of the "Seven Wise Masters," and from this the extracts are taken in Hagen's "Grundriss," p. 303. Compare A. Keller, "Le Roman des Sept Sages," p. cix. The German prose was printed in 1473.

have afforded poetical materials to modern German poets. Thus, for instance, it is from "Peter von Staufenberg und die Meerfei,"\* a poem of the middle of the fourteenth century, that Fouqué got the substance of his beautiful tale "Undine." Schiller's "Gang nach dem Eisenhammer" is also based on a story of those days. Of smaller tales of an anecdotal character—a species of composition best suited to the powers of that age—there was no lack; nay, even as late as the fifteenth century we meet with some by no means despicable specimens in this line. They may be classified under three names, which had come down from the thirteenth century. Serious narratives, chiefly didactic, of real events (*Mære*, whence *Märchen*); droll stories, the result of pure invention (*Aventiure*, *Abenteuer*—an expression applied as late as the time of Opitz to tales of fancy); and, lastly, Allegories (*Bíspel*, by which expression fable, akin to allegory, continued to be designated).

Of these three, the *Abenteuer* are in the best style.† The allegorical poems reach right through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to the beginning of the

\* "Der Ritter v. Staufenburg, ein alt-deutsches Gedicht," Engelhard, 1823. The old poem, which cannot be of much remoter date than that assigned to it in the text, was edited by Fischart, in an old version, 1588. From this old version comes the modernised extract in the "Wunderhorn," i. 407.

† Collections of these tales were made as early as the thirteenth century, like the collection of fables and stories by the Stricker and others (mentioned at page 190), under the title of "Die Welt." From a collection of the fourteenth century, extracts are printed in the "Koloczaer Codex altd. Gedichte," ed. Mailath and Köffinger, Pesth, 1817. Another collection is contained in the three first volumes of

sixteenth. At times they are written in strophes. One Hadamar von Laber\* wrote an allegorical "Jagdgedicht von der Minne." The "Morin," by Hermann von Sachsenheim†, describes the journey to the Venusberg, and the fidelity of the faithful Eckart. Besides these, we have the well-known "Theuerdank," of which the Emperor Maximilian composed the material, and partly also the form. Maximilian (or his chaplain, Melchior Pfinzing, who edited it,) here gives an account of his own youthful adventures in very bad rhymes, under the figure of a journey to woo Ehrenreich (Mary of Burgundy), daughter of King Rumreich (Charles the Bold). On the road, Theuerdank (Maximilian) meets with three enemies in three defiles. Their names are severally Fürwittig, Unfalo, and Neidelhart, and they each try to stop and kill him. Fürwittig no doubt represents the recklessness of his youth; Unfalo its mishaps; Neidelhart its political enemies. The whole abounds with a set of improbable stories and sporting anecdotes. At last Theuerdank is victorious, and by a sort of poetical justice, Fürwittig is beheaded, Unfalo hanged, and Neidelhart hurled from a wall. The best part of the work are the wood-cuts. Of the rest the

Lassberg's "Liedersaal" (1820-1822). A collection of 90 pieces, most of them printed before, is in Hagen's "Gesammtabenteuer," 1850, 3 vols.

\* This poem is in the Titurel-strophe, and was written in the fifteenth century, perhaps after some older model. There are many MSS. of it.

† This poem was composed in 1453, and published in 1513, and often subsequently. Sachsenheim also wrote, in 1455, the "Goldener Tempel"



less said the better. And yet it was the work of a celebrated emperor, and got up on parchment in the most costly style. Forty copies only were printed. It abounded in mysterious allusions, to unravel which many attempts were made. Three editions appeared between 1517 and 1537. Waldis then remodelled it, and the work appeared in four several editions. In the seventeenth century a fresh version appeared, and the book sold at auctions for hundreds of ducats.\* At present "Theuerdank" reposes in the dust of the libraries, as its writer does in that of the tomb.

Of historical poems, an Austrian chronicle, commonly called "Von Horneck," is the work of a certain Ottokar.† Another, describing the Council of Kostnitz, is scarcely readable.

We shall now proceed to lyrical poetry; a more pleasing theme. In the period now under consideration, the Minne-poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth century still continued to be cultivated; nay, as late as the fifteenth century, we find noble persons writing it, and not without success. Such were Heinrich

\* The text of "Theuerdank" was published by K. Haltaus, 1836, after the edition of 1517.

† Ottokar of Styria's "Oestreichische Chronik" was composed between 1300 and 1317, and printed in Pez, "Scriptores rer. Austr.," tom. iii. Compare Schacht "Aus. und über Ottokar's Chronik," 1821, "Jacobi de Ottoc. Chron. Austriaco," 1839. The "Livländische Reimchronik" belongs to the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century; published by Bergmann, 1817, and Pfeiffer, 1844. The "Deutschordens Chronik von Nikolaus von Jeroschin," dating from the fourteenth century, is merely a translation of the Latin Chronicle of Peter of Dusburg, but philologically important. Extracts of it were edited in 1854 by Pfeiffer, with a capital glossary.

von Mügeln\* of Meissen, Count Oswald von Wolkenstein†, Count Hugo von Montfort.‡ The latter being, like the olden knights, ignorant of reading and writing, composed his poems on horseback or in the chase, and dictated them to his Jäger, Burk Mangolt. But, as we have before observed, chivalry had now for the most part divorced itself from poetry; which fell into the hands of the *Meister*, i. e. the burghers of the wealthy rising towns. Thus Minnegesang became Meistergesang, which was framed on the strictest rules, and in the hands of such men as Muscatblüt§ and Michael Beheim|| degenerated into frivolity and artifice. These, however, must not be reckoned among the later Meistersingers, properly so called.

It is not exactly known when this institution of the Meistersingers, and their poetical guilds, arose in the

\* He lived in the middle of the fourteenth century. Compare Hagen and Büsching, "Aldt. Museum," ii. 180 and 196. In the tradition of the Meistersingers, he was said to be "a doctor of theology of Prague," and one of the founders of their art. He is the author of one of the oldest German prose translations, viz. that of "Valerius Maximus."

† He was born in the Tyrol, 1363–1367, died 1445. Compare Hoffmann, "Fundgr.," i. 238. His poems were edited in 1847 by Beda Weber.

‡ Born 1357, died 1423. Compare Aufsesz, "Anzeiger," 1832, sp. 178; 1833, sp. 292. Mone, "Anzeiger," 1834, sp. 200. Wackernagel, "Aldt. Lesebuch," p. 949.

§ Muscatblüt—of course, a fictitious name—lived at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and still wrote in 1437. Compare Aufsesz, "Anzeig.," 1832, sp. 258; 1833, sp. 230 and 268. "Aldt. Museum," i. 123; ii. 189. An edition of his poems by Von Groote appeared in 1853.

|| He was born in the vicinity of Weinsberg, 1416, and was still living in 1474. Hagen ("Samlung für aldt. Lit."), p. 75, prints a number of his poems, and Karajan his "Buch von den Wienern."

cities. Frauenlob is said to have been the founder of the oldest, viz. that of Mainz; but this is no doubt a fiction. At all events, there must be some confusion between a church and burgher singing school. This much is certain, that these guilds existed in the middle of the fifteenth century; and towards the close of it were looked upon as institutions of great antiquity. Their head-quarters were in South Germany; especially in Mainz, and then in Augsburg, Nuremburg, Memmingen, Colmar, Ulm, and other small cities. In some of these cities, the guild comprehended only persons of the same trade, *e. g.* the shoemakers in Colmar, and the weavers in Ulm. But in most places the musical citizens of various trades formed themselves into one society for the purpose. A regular guild they did not profess to be. Upright, virtuous, and good, these masters looked upon their art as devoted to holy purposes. Indeed, after the Reformation, their effusions were always on Bible texts; and if these pieces do not represent the poetry of the age, they at all events represent the best points of its social life; the probity, sobriety, contented domesticity, and the united spirit of the German burghers. When the weaver-master had left his loom, the shoemaker put by the implements of his art, and the tailor had hung his shears on the wall, he would then, in the silence of his chamber, set about composing songs original or imitated; and, when Sunday approached, he hung out the "Schultafel," tricked out with various devices, to announce that on the Sabbath afternoon, after service, there would be a singing exercise (Schule gesungen)

at the Rathaus, or (as was later the case) in the Church. On that day, the masters of the association, singers and poets, together with the scholars and lovers of music, and a large number of burghers and their families, assembled at the appointed rendezvous. The masters to hear the new poems recited, the scholars for practice in the art, while a reverential silence pervaded the vast assembly. Above, sat the presidents of the association (Gemerk); to wit, the Büchsenmeister (treasurer), the Schlüsselmeister (manager), the Merkmeister, and the Kronmeister. Next to Merkmeister stood the Merker, *i. e.* critics, judges, who “marked” all the faults, and at the conclusion gave their award on the merits of the singers. The victor was then crowned by the Kronmeister with a chaplet. This was often very costly, and was the permanent property of the association. Besides this, a jewel (Kleinod) was hung by a chain from his neck. In many populous and rich cities the association possessed a great number of valuables (together also called Kleinod); so that at every meeting, masters already distinguished might appear with their decorations, to the great delight and pride, doubtless of all the friends and relatives present. Hereupon, the best poems were inscribed in a great book, which was carefully preserved by the Schlüsselmeister. Such was the Sunday and Holiday amusements of the artizans of that period, the forefathers of the modern workmen; amusements of which their descendants have no reason to be ashamed. Let it be remembered also, that those were days when the higher class of burghers wasted their powers and substance in

luxury and riotous living; the peasant was in a state of physical and mental degradation; the learned, like the masses, were immoderate drinkers; while the nobles lavished their hereditary portion in feuds and bloodshed.

For centuries the Meister singing continued. In the sixteenth century it was at its zenith. After leaving its birthplace, Mainz, it found a second home at Nuremberg, where the last meeting took place about the year 1770.\* In Ulm it survived even the shock of the French Revolutionary wars. Twelve old Singmeisters still existed there as late as 1830. Driven from their "Schaustube" in the Rathaus, they held their meetings in the private dwellings of artizans, where they sung their songs memoriter. And it seems surprising how tradition could preserve for so many years pieces of such artistic intricacy alike in the text and music.

In the year 1839, four only of these aged people survived; the Büchsenmeister, the Schlüsselmeister, the Merkmeister, and the Kronmeister. On the 21st of October 1839, they celebrated the obsequies of the art, bequeathing their Schultafel and other properties to the Liederkranz at Ulm, accompanied by the wish "that the Liederkranz may emulate its predecessor in length of existence."†

After all, this Meistergesang was more an art of rhyme than poetry, properly so called. The ideas were of secondary consideration; words and syllables everything. In later times, when the Meistersingers re-

\* See Häselein, in "Bragur," iii. p. 69.

† "Augsburg Allgem. Zeitung," 1839, No. 311, Supplement, p. 2432.

sided for the most part in the cities of the reformed faith, care was taken that nothing should occur in their compositions of a contrary doctrinal tendency. The metrical system (Strophenbau) was tripartite, like that of the old Minnesingers. Sometimes there were as many as one hundred rhymes in a strophe. All sorts of odd names were applied to it. There was the blue and the red (Ton) mode, and the yellow violet mode; the red nut-blossom mode; the striped saffron-flower mode; the warm winter mode; the yellow lion-skin mode; the short ape mode, and the fat badger mode. At the end of the seventeenth century there were no less than two hundred and twenty-two different kinds of tunes or sing-strophes in full vogue. Twelve men were held in honour as the founders of art. Of these some were genuine Minnesingers, *e. g.* Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram (transmuted by them into Wolfgang Rohn), Reinmar von Zweter, Marner, Regenbogen, and, above all, Frauenlob. *Tabulatur* was the name given by the Mastersingers to the strict rules which regulated their art; a word still used in Germany.

Such then was the poetry of the Meistersingers. With the times it had no points of contact, exclusively adhering to what was old and traditional. It is not from any intrinsic merit of its own, but merely from its being a continuation of the Minnegesang, that it is important in a literary point of view. In the history of manners and civilization it is of much more moment.

In this same period there flourished another sort of lyric poetry of vastly greater importance, the Secular



popular lay (*Weltliche Volkslied*). It was the very antipodes of *Meistergesang*. In it the people's joys and sorrows find an artless utterance. Often rude and vehement, it is, nevertheless, always animated and not seldom highly poetical. The old popular poetry bursts forth in lyrical, if not in epic, shape; and that with wondrous power. With such power, indeed, that it served to inspire a Herder and a Goethe after a lapse of more than two centuries. The *Meistergesang* kept one even tenor throughout. It had no development. Not so the national song, which began in the fourteenth, grew in the fifteenth, and was at its best in the sixteenth century, which is really beyond the limits of the period of which we are treating. But it will be best to take the whole history of this sort of poetry at once, with the exception of one branch hereafter to be mentioned.

There is no doubt that national songs, in the sense in which we here regard it, existed as early as the twelfth century; songs or poems where the author gave utterance to his feelings and experiences with truth and intensity. At the same time he never got beyond generals. He never, as in the art-poetry of the *Minne-lied*, entered into circumstantial and connected details of individual experience. Such effusions may possibly have been current in circles to which the artistic *Minne* never descended, but they were never committed to writing at the time, and were overwhelmed by the court poetry. In the fourteenth century, however, when the court poetry died out, and the *Minne*gesang gradually subsided into silence, these sounds of nature

were once more heard, and (with the paltry exception of the *Meistergesang*) ruled supreme during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, over the whole field of lyric poetry. From the "*Limburg Chronicle*" we learn that in the fourteenth century, songs of this kind were sung and whistled by knights and serving-men in town and country all over the land.

The "*Volkslied*" (national lay) of this period is entirely on the same basis as the old "*Volkslied*," from which the old Epic originated. The incidents and experiences of real life are its theme, as they were of the old epic national lay. But with this important difference, that it is the experiences, not of a nation, but of an individual, which are now sung. There it is acts, here feelings, which are portrayed. But then they are feelings so simple, so true, so universal, that everybody, and not the poet alone, has experienced them. So that in both kinds, this national lay and the old national lay, the actions and feelings are not imaginary, but already, so to say, in existence. In such compositions, of course, any strict connexion or consecutive order cannot be expected any more than in the feelings and thoughts which course through the mind. Hence the parts are thrown together rhapsodically according to the impulse of the moment. As for filling up the details, analysing the thoughts and feelings, and giving a colouring to the whole, after the manner of art-poetry, with these the *Volkslied* does not concern itself in the least. Hence the apparent gaps and leaps with which it abounds no less than the ancient Epic. It was this "*Kecke Wurf*," this rapid transition, that Goethe so much admired.

The music is like the text, simple, yet moving in the extreme; artless melody, in short, regardless of the rules of harmony, but admirably suited to the words. Indeed, the greatest musical composers have seldom achieved such perfection in this respect. Volkslieder (national lays) that are not sung are not worthy of the name.

And who was the author of these songs? It is with them as with the old Epic. The name of no distinct person stands on record as their author; in fact they are the offspring, not of individual invention, but of a whole nation's heart. They describe circumstances and feelings which are the common property of all that have sprung from the same national stock, in which all have a sympathy more or less. The actual writer, if there ever was one, is lost in the crowd of according spirits, of which he is the mouth-piece. The very same subjects we find handled at opposite ends of Germany, differing only in local colouring and dialect.

Now, in some parts of Germany even at the present day, where modern song-books have not quenched the fire of the people's invention, something of the same sort of operation is at work which doubtless brought into being the old Volkslieder. Societies meet together, one sings a strophe, a second adds another strophe on the spur of a moment, and a third catches the inspiration. This is the case with the Heimgarten (evening societies of the people) in the Tyrol. So in Upper Hessa the people still sing on, *i. e.* compose, in spite of the song-books, without Gleim, and Grossheim, and Abela. In the weaving-room, when the

songstress has exhausted her budget of songs, another improvises a verse, and another catches up the tuneful strain. Many of the songs so improvised bear such a striking similarity to the old Volkslieder that, as aforesaid, we must ascribe to both a similar origin. In ancient times the materials of these Volkslieder were very frequently historical. At the close of the poem it is often stated that the transactions are described by "one who was an eye-witness;" and the truth-like simplicity of the description made the piece current in a much more extended circle than that to which it originally belonged. Thus the robber-knight Eppelin von Gaila, and the landlouser Schüttensamen, were first sung in and about Nuremberg. So also, in the fourteenth century, Lindenschmidt, likewise a robber, was sung in the Breisgau country; but afterwards they were all well known throughout Germany. So the song on the capture of Kuffstein, and execution of its defender, Hans Benzenauer, by Maximilian I., which was composed in 1505, and was sung all over the country for a full century, gave the melody to several other songs of a like nature.

In like manner the Landsknechts sang songs on the battle of Pavia in the very moment of victory—songs which lived in the mouths of the people for a good hundred years.

To the same class belong the old Swiss songs on the battles of Sempach and Murten; and those of Möringer, Heinrich der Löwe, the Knight Trimunitas, and others.

But the mass of the Volkslieder consists of love-pieces, *e. g.*, on parting, on constancy and inconstancy, on separation, on meeting again after an absence of seven years, on never meeting more. There are messages sent to the loved one by dear Miss Nightingale; laments for the death of the bride, which will never cease till all the waters run out, and that will never be. Nothing can be more touching than these simple songs, with their heartfelt melody. “Insbruck, ich muss dich lassen” (Insbruck, I must leave thee, must go to a foreign land); or, “Warum bist du denn so traurig?” (Why so sad, then, dearest? Think’st that I’ll forget thee? Thou dost please me all too well. Leaves and grass may fade and languish, but not true love; though lost to sight, to memory thou art dear); or, “So viel Stern am Himmel stehen, an dem blauen güldnen Zelt” (So many stars in Heaven stand, in the tent of blue and gold); or, “Es steht ein Baum in Odenwald, der hat viel grüne Aest” (There stands a tree in Odenwald, with many branches green); or the song of inconstancy, “Es stehen drei Sternlein am Himmel” (Three little stars in Heaven stand); or that of constancy, “Es stund eine Linde im tiefen Thal” (There stood a linden in the deep vale); and very many others might be cited, a single one of which is worth a whole volume describing mock feelings and sensations at second hand. Then the power of such songs, the force with which they go direct to the heart, —with this Germany became experimentally acquainted not long ago.

The melody of the "Mantel-lied," for instance, which in reality belonged to a song of the sixteenth century, beginning, "Es waren einmal drei Grafen gefangen,"—what an electrical effect it had all the country over, as soon as the sound of it was re-awakened. Other Volkslieder are of a festive nature, full of genuine, hearty hilarity—of wit and humour, teeming with fun and frolic, *e. g.*, "Der liebste Buhle den ich han, der liegt beim Wirt im Keller; der hat ein hölzin Röcklein an, und heisst der Muskateller" (The dearest lover that I have, he lies in mine host's cellar; a wooden jacket he has on, his name is Muscadeller); or, "Wie soll ich mich hinkehren, ich dummes Brüderlein? Wie soll ich mich ernähren? mein Gut ist allzu klein" (O, whither shall I go, a lad so dull as I? How ever get my living, with a little estate like mine?) All these are quite as simple and true to nature as the others.

Many of these pieces, as may well be imagined, are somewhat abrupt and unpolished, but not a single one of them can be called rude. In them we see painted to the life the careless independence and the uneasy gadding spirit of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It has also been remarked that this national poetry was almost entirely the poetry of man, whereas the Minne-gesang was the poetry of woman. While we admire the gentleness, the modesty, the feminine sensibility of the latter, the manly strength, the vehemence and rapidity of the former must not be underrated. It was this sort of poetry, then, that filled every mouth and every heart, from the hoary veteran to the lisping infant, during the second half of the fourteenth, the



fifteenth, and, above all, the sixteenth century. Numberless were the pieces composed in it. Like the Minne-poetry, 300 years before, it resounded, but in louder tones, through every village and town of the land. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it was almost entirely oral, it had reached its zenith. It was not till the middle of that century that collections began to be made; and twenty-five years later, pedantry, and a taste for everything foreign, began to tell upon it prejudicially. So that productions in national poetry dating from the beginning of the seventeenth century remind us of the modern attempts in the same line, in which J. H. Voss and even Schiller failed. It was a case of poems for the people, instead of poems out of the people. In the palmy days of erudite poetry, *i. e.*, during the seventeenth century and at the beginning of the eighteenth, the Volkslied was utterly forgotten and despised. It was reserved for Herder, in his book on German Art, and in his "Völkerstimmen," to point out these forgotten gems. Goethe followed, addressing himself to this sort of material with all the power of his poetical genius. His lyrical pieces are evidence of this; indeed, it is in the treatment of topics of popular caste that he shines most conspicuous.

It is from these Volkslieder, that Bürger derives the best features of his compositions; while his worst are due to forced and unnatural imitations of them. "Leonora" is of the former class; of the latter, the "Daughter of the Pastor of Taubenhain." But it was a long time before the Volkslied asserted for itself that influence generally, which it must have if a peo-

ple's poetical feeling is sound. The *illuminati* of the latter part of the last century were no friends of poetry, least of all of Folk-poetry. Herder and Goethe came in for a good share of their ridicule and indignation; while Campe pronounced the inventor of the spinning-wheel to be an immeasurably greater man than the poet of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey."

The bookseller Nicolai also had his fling at the Volkslied in a couple of Almanacs, but to little purpose. It was not, however, till thirty years after Herder that Clemens Brentano, in conjunction with Achim von Arnim, edited the "Wunderhorn," a most choice collection of pieces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which placed German Folk-poetry in that commanding position which it has never ceased to occupy since in the eyes of all good judges. The worst part about this book is the corruptness of the text, bits of the genuine old Volkslied being often mixed up with more modern lucubrations.

L. Uhland is also the editor of another capital collection of the same kind.\* Of less note are the collec-

\* "Alte Hoch- und Nieder-deutsche Volkslieder," &c., Ludwig Uhland, vol. 1, in 5 books, 1844-1845. Here are 365 lays, many of which, however, do not belong to the period mentioned in the text, *e.g.* the very ancient fragment of a Jagdlied (hunting song) (see note, p. 25), and the "Traugemundlied;" as also a number of hymns, and, among others, Luther's "Ein fester Burg." This excellent collection, however, includes a third part about of the lays most sung in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; although it omits some of the most famous Landsknecht songs. Even Uhland has omitted "Gott grüss dich Bruder Veite," "Es geht ein frischer Sommer daher," and others.

Of the numerous collections of songs of the sixteenth century, only one has been reprinted, *viz.* "Liederbüchlein, darinnen 260 allerhand schöner weltlicher Lieder," 1582 (also 1578 and 1584), under the odd

tions of Wolf, Soltau, and Körner. There is only one living German poet — Heinrich Hoffman von Fallersleben — who has succeeded in reproducing the old Volkslied; and this he has done to admiration.

Our history must now return to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when we find the first germs of the Volkslied.

Between the decay of Minne-poetry and the appearance of the Volkslied, there are several intermediate productions which represent the transition from the quiet descriptive poetry of the older period, with its refinements of expression and thought, to the more lively and bouncing tones of Folk poetry.

Some of the later Minne-singers, such as Counts Wolkenstein, and von Montford, now and then give forth tones, which remind us of the coming poetry. The same may be said of the not unfrequent interlocutory pieces between two lovers, which have much of the familiar, hearty, and lively spirit of the Volkslied; *e.g.* the piece called "Empfahen," where a girl begins, "Willkomm, mein liebstes ein" (Welcome, my dearest). He replies, "Genad traut Fraulein rein" (I greet thee, maiden, tender and true). "Where hast thou been, wanderer, so long away from me? How has it fared with thee the while?" "Nought pleased me, though I saw full much to please." "Hast ever thought on me?" "Lady, on thee my

title of "Das Ambraser Liederbuch vom 1582," edited by Bergmann, Stuttgart, 1845. A unique copy of the edition of 1582 is preserved at Vienna; it was printed at Frankfort.

thought hath ever been." "Art sure, wast constant ever?" "I swear it." "Sure! that glads my heart." "Lady, 'tis true." Many of these amoebæan pieces were set to the music of the trumpet or horn,\* and the effect was remarkably good. Another class of poems now commences, which subsequently plays no unimportant part, and which, though in the form of the Minnelied, are in substance Volkslieder—we mean the drinking songs. The Minne poetry, and indeed the whole poetry of the thirteenth century, had nothing of the kind, with the exception of a humorous piece, called "Weinschwelg." One of these drinking songs runs thus: "Wine, wine, from the Rhine, very clear and fine. Thy colour gleams with light, like crystal or ruby bright. Thou givest medicine for sorrow. Then pour out wine and drink, dear Katie, mine. Red cheeks makest thou. Olden foes thou reconcil'st; the Augustines and Beguines. Both forget their pain and sorrow; and their—German, their—Latin too."

Akin to these are the numerous apostrophes to wine, *e.g.* that by the humorous writer, Hans Rosenblüt, beginning "Nun gesegn dich Gott, du lieber Eidgesell" (Now bless thee God, thou comrade dear, thy name is Tickle-gum, &c.). †

During the whole of this period, but principally at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth

\* The lay here cited stands, with others, in Hoffmann's "Fundgr.", i. 383. Compare Wackernagel, "Lesebuch," i. sp. 969-972.

† "Der Weinschwelg" is in the Brothers Grimm's "Altdeutsche Wälder," iii. 13. Compare Wackernagel, "Lesebuch," i. sp. 575. Ten Weingrüsse, of Rosenblüts, with the ten corresponding Weinsegen, are in Haupt and Hoffmann's "Altd. Blätter," p. 401.

century, religious poetry was written with much success. The old Minne-poetry had also its religious side; chiefly in the Lobesänge and Leiche of Gottfried von Strassburg and others. But whereas in them the writer did not get beyond mere abstract reflections and descriptions of heavenly things, religious poetry *now* became something much more real, depicting what the writer had himself experienced and felt. Such, for example, is the beautiful lay, "Himmelreich ich freu mich dein," &c. (Realms of Heaven, what joy is yours; would that I might there behold Jesus and his Mother dear, our beauteous Lady; and the Angels with the crowns singing so prettily. How happy must they be; God is so loveable.") \* The same features are observable in many of the religious poems of Heinrich von Lauffenberg and the monk of Salzburg, who lived at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century.†

From the tenth to the fifteenth century, macaronic verse is often met with. Such is the Christmas hymn, which has, however, a thoroughly national tone about it, beginning, "In dulci jubilo, nun singet und seid

\* The lay, "Himmelriche ich frowe mich din," is printed in Wackernagel, i. 893.

† The Benedictine Johannes (or Hermann) of Salzburg lived in the second half of the fourteenth century. Haupt and Hoffmann, "Alt. Bl.," ii. 325. Heinrich von Lauffenburg, priest at Freiburg, in the Breisgau, and, subsequently to 1445, belonging to the Johanniter Monastery at Strasburg, lived in the first half of the fifteenth century. Aufsesz "Anz." 1832, sp. 41. See poems by both writers in P. Wackernagel, "Das deutsche Kirchenlied," 1841. The most important treatise on the spiritual poems before the Reformation is Hoffmann's "Geschichte des deutschen Kirchenliedes bis auf Luther's Zeit," 1832 and 1854.

froh; unsers Herzens Wonne liegt in præsepio, und leuchtet wie die Sonne matris in gremio. Alpha es et O. Alpha es et O."

"In dulci jubilo, let the glad song flow;  
Our heart's delight lies in præsepio,  
Like the sun so bright, matris in gremio.  
Alpha art and O. Alpha art and O."

This song, dating from the middle of the fifteenth century, so expressive of a whole people's joy, was preserved unaltered in the Evangelical church of Germany for centuries, and only ceased to be sung at Christmas a few years ago.

In the period now under consideration, as well as in that antecedent to it, Didactic poetry was nearly allied to lyric poetry. On it we see clearly stamped the character of the whole period: the transition from the artificial to the popular and simple, and the final preponderance of the latter. In the fourteenth century there were still two poets, who with all their stiffness in form and material, most strongly remind us of the thirteenth century and the good days of poetry. We mean Heinrich der Teichner, an Austrian, a tender and imaginative gnomic poet (*spruchdichter*),\* and Peter Suchenwirt, also an Austrian.†

Another sort of poem is what may be called the riddle-poem, *e. g.* the "Traugemundslid," (*i. e.* Inter-

\* See "Wiener Jahrb." 1818, i. Supplement, p. 26. Poems of his are printed in Docen's "Miscell." ii. 228, and in Lassberg's "Liedersaal." A collection was made by Karajan, 1855.

† Primisser's "Peter Suchenwirts Werke," 1827. Compare Koberstein's "Ueber die Sprache des Suchenwirt," 1828; "Quæstiones Suchenwirtianæ," 1842.



preter song), the questions in which resemble those in the text of the "Dessau March," though they are more poetical. "Now, tell me, Master Traugemunt, two-and-seventy lands thou know'st, what makes the Rhine so deep? What makes the women so charming? What makes the meadows so green? What makes the knights so bold? If thou canst tell me this, I'll think you a fine fellow." "Thou'st come to the right man. From many a source the Rhine is deep; 'tis love that makes the women charm. From many a root the meadows are green. From many a wound the knights are bold."\* Another sort of poem, in which the popular wisdom delighted to appear from the fourteenth till the end of the sixteenth century, and which even now is not quite obsolete, was the Priamel, (from præambulum, prelude,) which, after a set of antecedent sentences, often winds up with a pithy little remark, *c. g.*—

"He who will wash a raven white,  
And does the same with all his might,  
Or by the sun-light dry the snow,  
And box up all the winds that blow;  
Who'll cry, 'Bad luck, who'll buy, who'll buy?'  
To shave bald pates industrious try,  
To make fools wise will undertake, —  
Why, he's an ass, and no mistake."

Or—

"Bohemian monk and Suabian nun;  
Indulgence from Carthusian won;  
A Polish bridge, and Wendish truth;  
For stolen hens a gypsy's ruth;

\* This poem, which rests in part on very ancient tradition, and belongs to the minstrel poetry, was first published in the third volume of "Müller's Collection;" then by Grimm in the "Aldt. Wälder," ii. 8-30; also in "Wackernagel," i. sp. 831; and Uhland's work mentioned above.

Italian reverence, Spaniard's oath ;  
 A German fast, a Cologne maid ;  
 A daughter handsome, but a jade ;  
 Red beard, or bow of alder made ;—  
 For these thirteen, or twice as many,  
 No one would give a half-penny."

In many of these Priamels there is often much wit and truth mixed up with great vulgarity.\*

At the end of the period now being discussed, satire begins to make its appearance ; but we shall defer our description of it, as well as the "Schwänke," "Possen," and "Volksbücher," till the sixteenth century, which was pre-eminently the period of German comedy and satire.

In this age we also find the beginnings of German dramatic poetry. With the Germans, as with the Greeks, the drama rose out of religious worship. On the anniversary of the Passion, the Gospel history of our Saviour's sufferings and death was declaimed by several persons, each of whom represented those who were present at the scene, as the Apostles, Herod, Pilate, the High Priest, &c., whilst the Priest spoke the words of our Saviour. This used to be done from the twelfth to the seventeenth century in Roman Catholic and Evangelical Churches. The speakers soon

\* The form of the Priamel goes back to the twelfth century, and is also met with in the Scandinavian Havamal. Some of the sayings in Freidank's "Bescheidenheit" have the same shape ; W. Grimm, "Freidank," p. cxxii. Later Priamels of the fifteenth century are printed in Eschenburg's "Denkmäler," 1799, p. 385. Some of the sixteenth century are in Kirchhof's "Wendunmut," 1565, and elsewhere. A collection of fifteenth century Priamels is printed by Keller in "Alte gute Schwänke," 1847.

began to wear costume ; and, at the same time, the speaking, no doubt, became acting. The language used was principally Latin ; the place, the church. The text of the Gospels was not strictly adhered to. It was abbreviated and versified ; and interpolations made in it from the ecclesiastical traditions. The clergy arranged the text, indeed, they superintended the whole affair. Even at an early period, hymns and bits of recitative in German were interspersed. The Lament of Mary under the Cross was, perhaps, the first part that was thus Germanised. So, then, the drama of Germany was in its commencement religious, and, of course, tragic. But, in the fourteenth century, with this tragic element a comic one was likewise combined. This part was sustained partly by the covetous Judas, partly by the merchant, who sells spices to the women on their way to the tomb of the Saviour, and who appears in the exact character and costume of a travelling quacksalver, or cheap jack of the day. The Church, impatient of this profanation of ecclesiastical and holy things, issued numerous decretals on the subject. Several of these, dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth century, drawn up by bishops and provincial synods, still survive. In them all acting in churches, and unseemly dresses and jokes, are strictly forbidden. The representation was consequently removed from the church to the open air, and assumed a more popular shape. Latin made way for German verse ; and the Church seems rather to have favoured these representations, so long as they were under the management of the clergy and temporal authorities. Indeed, such

plays of the "Passion" and "Resurrection" continued to be acted in some places till late in the eighteenth century. And in Southern Bavaria they have been revived of late, not without success.\*

The transactions which took place at the birth of Christ were also represented; *e. g.*, the song of the angels, the finding of Christ by the shepherds, the adoration of the magi; as well as parts of the parables. Thus the history of the five wise and five foolish virgins was represented by certain monks at Eisenach, in the year 1322. The exclusion of the five foolish virgins made such an impression on Frederick Margrave of Meissen, who was present, that he was struck with apoplexy a few days after. In the latter part of the fourteenth century the events in the lives of various saints came also to be thus represented. These religious dramas have received the name of Mysteries in France, Italy, and England; but the usual name in Germany was always Spiel.

Although there was sufficient evidence to prove that Passion and Easter Plays were very commonly played in Germany, especially in the central part of it, and this not in towns only, but also in villages; yet, even till a very recent period few complete texts were discoverable, and these only of Easter Plays† and Plays

\* In Ober-Ammergau, a secluded spot in the Bavarian Tyrol, a Passions-spiel is thus represented.—*Editor*.

† An Easter play of the fifteenth century is printed in Hoffmann's "Fundgr.", ii. 296. (Extracts previously in Wackernagel, "Lesebuch," 1835, p. 781). Another, of the fourteenth century, is in Mone's "Alt.-deutsche Schauspiele," 1841. A third, in Mone's "Schauspiele des Mittelalters," 1846, vol. ii. pp. 33-106. The last is repeated by Ettmüller, "Dat spil fan der upstandige," 1851.

of Saints.\* Perhaps in some cases the dialogue was traditional, and did not require to be written down; at least only the beginning words of the speeches. This is the case with a play which was performed at Frankfort, where the stage directions are written in Latin. The more important portions only would be written at length, as the "Lament of Mary," or those parts that differed from the old-established form. It was not till the year 1842 that a perfect Passion Play was discovered. This was formerly played at Alsfeld.† Since then two others have been found.

In these pieces we must not look for a great display of art. There is a falling off alike in the language and the versification. The "Lament of Mary" is the best part. "Alas! Death, this anguish thou could'st end, would'st thou but send thy messengers hither to me. Oh! woe is me, Death will part us. Death, take us both, that He may not mourn alone. Child of my heart, the light of thine eyes has paled. Thy might and thy strength is gone. Woe is me! my beloved Son. Alas! for Thy great agony. Oh woe! how sadly dost Thou

\* A play of St. Dorothea is given in Hoffmann, "Fundgr." ii. 284; of the Ascension of the Virgin, in Mone, "Alt.-d. Schausp.;" also *ibid.* a Corpus Christi play. With these we may include the history, in the form of dialogue, of Theophilus, printed in Brun's "Romant. Ged.," 1798, p. 288.

† Vilmar inserted specimens of this play in Haupt's "Zeitschrift f. Alterthum," 1843, iii. 477. Gervinus (ii. 370) notices a Passion play in the Heidelberg Library (Cod. Pal. 402). A Passion play of the fourteenth century has since been published by Mone, "Schauspiele des Mittelalters," 1846, vol. i. p. 72; one of the fifteenth, *ibid.*, ii. 183; also a play on the Infancy of Jesus, *ibid.*, i. 143; of the Burial of Christ, ii. 131; of the Ascension, i. 254; and of the Last Judgment, 273.

hang. Oh woe! how Thou dost wrestle with Death. Oh woe! how Thy limbs quiver. Alas! what shall I, poor woman, do, since I saw my Child suffer so great pain. In this hour a sword doth pierce to the very bottom of my heart; Simeon's cruel sword. It hath found me out. In this hour abundant pain is mine. Ah! my beloved Child, speak one word; say I am Thy mother. Alas! He cannot; He is dead. Oh! thou hard cross-tree, what misery thou hast wrought me. Didst thou but know what hangs on thee, thou would'st fold thine arms together, and let my poor Son rest."

John leads the wailing mother down from the cross; but hardly has she departed when Jesus exclaims, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" and the mother cries in touching accents, "Oh! woe is me, I hear a cry; that was my Child that called out in his anguish;" and then she hastens back to the cross and remains there till *consummatum est*. The modern features in these plays which are most worthy of noting are the dispute between the merchant who has sold the ointment to Mary Magdalen and Maria Salome, and his wife; and the higgling between Judas and Caiaphas, who has paid him the thirty pieces in base coin. So also one of the best parts in the Alsfeld Passion Play is a quaint scene where Mary Magdalen, before her conversion, gives herself up to worldly delights. She adorns herself before a glass, sings jovial songs, dances immoderately, and after tiring one partner out, says, "Yes, yes, sir, you're tired out. Can't I dance though. As many as you please. I'll serve you all alike."



There is one curious Mystery about Pope Joan, entitled "Ein schön Spiel von Frau Jutten." The author of which is said to have been one Theodorich Schernberg, a town clergyman. This piece, however, is not, as might be expected, of a comic nature, but quite of a serious cast. A troop of demons with very strange names, which also recur in the Alsfeld play, entices Joanna to commit the fraud, for which she afterwards does penance.\*

Out of this mixture of the tragic and comic element there sprung tragedy and comedy, properly so called. The first specimens of the latter were the Fastnachtspiele, or Shrove-tide plays. These were of the nature of low farce; witty, but coarse and obscene. Several specimens remain, the composition of two writers: Hans Rosenblüt, of Nuremburg (mentioned above as the author of drinking songs), and called Schneppperer † from his ribaldry; and Hans Folz, a barber, also of Nuremburg, though born at Worms. ‡

\* Schernberg's (or Schernbeck's) play of "Frau Jutte" is said to date from 1480, and was published at Eisleben, by Hieronymus Tilesius, in 1565. It was reprinted in Gottsched's "Nötiger Vorrat," &c. 1757-1765, vol. ii. p. 81, and lately in Keller's "Fastnachtspiele," ii. 900.

† Rosenblüt lived in the middle of the fifteenth century. A number of his sayings (Sprüche) are given by Keller, *ibid.*, 1083-1195. Six of his dramas, more correctly, stories in dialogue, are given by Gottsched, *ibid.*, ii. 43; two in Tieck's "Deutsches Theater;" a seventh, from a Munich MS., has been published by Margraff.

‡ He lived about 1480. His Fastnachtspiele, and numerous jests, are only preserved in print. Many are in Keller, *iii.* 1195, *seq.* Gervinus and Koberstein make him to have written as early as 1447. This is more than doubtful. Of his tale, "Pfarrer im Loch," he does not say that it was written in 1447, but only that the incident on which it is based occurred in that year. All the known Fastnachtspiele of the

If we are to judge from what took place in this respect with the Greeks, the time for the rise of the German drama is now arrived. Epic has had its run, and is complete and finished. Lyric poetry followed; and the period is now at hand when objective and subjective poetry penetrate into dramatic representations. But, as compared with Greece, Germany has this disadvantage; that the first germs of its drama appeared at a time when all the old national memories were becoming obsolete; when literature and everything was gone to the bad; a time when much happened, but nothing was done. And hence it was that the germs were choked and no such thing as a national drama was formed. And although many times subsequently a national drama seemed on the point of coming into existence, it always came to nothing.

All that now remains is to say a few words about the Prose of this period. The works on history must first be mentioned. The peculiar merit of the chronicle writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, is their simple unpretending style of narrative, a style well suited to the facts they relate. Upon the whole, the historians of the fourteenth are superior to those of the fifteenth century, in fluency and flexibility of style. Most distinguished in this respect are the Strasburg chroniclers, Friederich Closener, who lived in the

fifteenth century (by Rosenblüt, Folz, Gengenbach, Schernberg, and others), amounting to 121 in all, were published, with good commentaries, by Keller, in three volumes, 1853. Most of them are revoltingly rude, and do not contain a particle of poetry.

middle,\* and Jacob Twinger who lived at the close of the fourteenth century.† Next to these in merit are the "Limburg Chronicle,"‡ a portion of the Hersfeld History, by an anonymous writer; Johann Riedesel's § Hessian Chronicle, and Peter Eschenloer,|| a Silesian historian of the fifteenth century. The Swiss chronicles of Diebold Schilling and Petermann Etterlin,¶ written at the end of the fifteenth century, are much harder in style, and still more so is the strange allegorical history of the reign of Frederick III., and Maximilian I., entitled "Der Weisskunig." The author of this work, as of "Theuerdank," was most likely the Emperor Maximilian himself; the redaction of it being confided to his secretary Treitz-sauerwein. The best part of it are the excellent wood-cuts by Hans Burgmaier. Both manuscripts and wood-cuts lay unprinted for nearly three hundred years, and were not put in the press till the year 1775.

\* Priest and Choral Vicar at the Cathedral of Strasburg. He finished his "Chronicle" in 1362. It is the first prose chronicle of universal German history, and was published by the Literary Society of Stuttgart in 1842.

† Extracts of Twinger's "Chronicle" were published by Schilter in 1698.

‡ In its original shape this "Chronicle" reaches to 1398. The author was the Limburg Town Clerk Tilemann (Emmel?). It was published in 1619 by Faust v. Aschaffenburg; then in 1720 and 1826 (1828). In the two last editions the language is modernized.

§ This began with the year 1232, and reached to 1327. The author was probably tutor of Count John of Ziegenhain (1334-1341). It is only preserved in Gerstenberger's (1522) version.

|| "Geschichten der Stadt Breslau," &c. 1440-1479, ed. Kunisch 1827. Eschenloer died 1481.

¶ Schilling was of Bern, and wrote the "Burgundian Wars of 1468-1480;" first printed in 1743. Etterlin wrote a "Chronica der Eidgenossenschaft," printed 1507.

After the Historical prose comes the Didactic-ascetic prose, which however in point of pliancy and softness surpasses the former. Its chief subject was the mystic theology of the day; the scholastic theology being written in Latin. While the schoolmen treated chiefly of knowledge and learning, the Mystics turned their attention for the most part to the perfection (*ausbildung*) of the inner man. Briefly, they wished to possess Christ himself, rather than know much about Christ's doctrines; they used the mother tongue as the best means of expressing the strength and truth of their feelings, and thus attained to a correctness, dexterity, and perspicacity of expression, which still command our admiration, while there is a poetic tinge about their style strongly reminding us of the Franciscan Berthold mentioned above, page 215. In some respects this mystic school was a forerunner of the Reformation. Of its numerous treatises, collections of aphorisms, and of rules for a contemplative life, sermons, and so forth, a few only will here be mentioned. In the first half of the fourteenth century we meet with the chiefs of the party in Germany. Such were Heinrich Seusse, commonly called Suso, whose writings excel in fervour, depth, and tenderness, in cheerful and genuine piety, while no work of the period\* surpasses them in harmonious polish and flexibility of style. Next comes Johann Tauler (properly Tâler), the celebrated monk-

\* Heinrich von Berg, called Seusse (Suso), after the name of his mother, with his monastic name, Amandus, was born, 1300, at Kostnitz. In his thirteenth year he entered the Dominican order, and died at Ulm, 1365. His works were printed in 1482 and 1512, and published in modern language by M. Diepenbrock.

preacher of Cologne and then of Strasburg, whose sermons in force, depth, and truth, are hardly to be surpassed.\* The following times of polemic theology and abstruse dialectics ignored him. John Eck, the head of the schoolmen of the sixteenth century, on the Roman Catholic side, and Theodore Beza on the Reformed side, thought but little of Tauler. It was reserved for Ph. J. Spener to be the first to acknowledge his merits.† The works of both these remarkable men, Seusse and Tauler, have lately been modernized to the detriment occasionally of the style.

The following books of devotion also, though often tiresome from the quantity of allegories, abound in excellent passages. Hermann von Fritzlar's "Lives of the Saints;"‡ Otto von Passau's "Four and Twenty Elders, or the Golden Throne of the Loving Soul," belonging to the fourteenth century; also "The Four and Twenty Harps," an imitation of Otto of Passau's work; and "The Treasure Holder, or Shrine of true Riches," belonging to the fifteenth century.

At the conclusion of this period there was a remarkable preacher, Johann Geiler, called of Keisersberg, who was one of the last of the mystic school, and, like Tauler, resided at Strasburg. He died, March 10, 1510, and is buried in Strasburg Minster. His

\* Tauler was born about 1290, and died at Strasburg, 1361. His sermons were first published in 1498; an enlarged edition in 1521; and by Spener in 1688; frequently in modern times.

† Twenty-five of Tauler's sermons have lately appeared in an English dress, with a preface by Kingsley.—*Editor*.

‡ "Deutsche Mystiker des 14 Jahrhunderts," ed. F. Pfeiffer, 1845, vol. i. It contains Fritzlar and Nikolaus of Strasburg, as well as David of Augsburg, who belonged to the thirteenth century. See note, p. 215.

celebrity was equal to that of Tauler, who preceded him by one hundred and fifty years. In the first half of his work, entitled "Granatapfel" (Pomegranate), where he treats of man in his beginning, progress, and perfection, the style is like Tauler's; and yet he differs from Tauler and the elder mystics by entering more exactly into Bible history, whence arises a more decided influence upon the outer life. Hence the style here is more vigorous, and more in the popular vein than that of his predecessors. This is still more the case in other works, where he attacks the depravity of morals, the luxury and voluptuousness of the age, and the worldliness of the spiritual class. Now and then, his descriptions appear strange, and even comic. Thus his pulpit definition of "bishop," which was repeated so many times in the sixteenth century. "In his opinion it was derived from 'Beisschaf' (bite-sheep), because, in the present day, instead of feeding their sheep, the bishops bit and devoured them like so many savage dogs and wolves." Elsewhere he compares the life of a Christian man with that of a hare, and in a series of discourses carries out the comparison in detail. A hare runs better uphill than down; so a Christian man, and especially a monk, ought to run better and more diligently uphill in good works to God the Father, than downhill after his lusts. The hare has long ears; so a Christian, and especially a monk, ought to have long ears to hear what God says. The hare is roasted, so the spiritual hare must be roasted in the fire of adversity. The hare is larded, for it is but dry and lean eating by itself; so the spiritual hare, that he may not



be dried up in the fire of sufferings, must be larded with the fat of devotion and love. Bizarre as this may appear, and indeed is, yet we forget the strangeness of it not only in the preacher's genuine and fervent zeal, but also in the extreme cleverness with which he carries out the comparison.

At one time people would only admit of there having been this one real preacher before Luther; but we have seen that this was not the case. At the same time there is no doubt that Geiler was the sole popular preacher whose sermons are extant of the days just before Luther. Most popular in style are those sermons of his which were written down by Johann Pauli, the Franciscan monk.

All the other prose of this period, especially the translations of foreign works, is far behind that of history and the pulpit. The old translation of the Bible before Luther's, of which up to the year 1520 there appeared fourteen editions, bears the impress of the mystic school. Upon the whole it is smoother and softer than that of Luther, to which for this very reason it is inferior, although here and there it may have the advantage. The old translation of Boccaccio, and the writings of Albrecht von Eybe, and Nicolaus von Wyle, are stiff and clumsy from too close an adherence to the original.

The sixteenth century and the first twenty-four years of the seventeenth century are comprised in the period now to be treated of. In the struggle which henceforward takes place between modern ideas and

the worn-out elements of the past, the last embers of the old poetical national consciousness become utterly extinguished. Even in the thirteenth century there were indications of this in the improper preponderance of art-poetry over natural-poetry. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as we have seen, this art-poetry was entirely beaten out of the field, and to it succeeded a New kind of Popular Poetry, which, though incomparably behind the Old Popular Poetry in extent, depth, and fulness, was, nevertheless, fresh and vigorous. In the sixteenth century the Old Folk-poetry utterly disappears, and this New Folk-poetry rapidly rose to perfection. But before long it in its turn succumbed.

The chief causes of its downfal were, the exclusive domination now assumed by learning, and the sharp distinction drawn between the learned and unlearned, the encroachments of polemical theology upon literature generally, the introduction of foreign laws, and the altered position of the state ensuing thereon—against all these novelties it was unable to maintain its ground. Attacked, confined, despised, and oppressed on all sides, it is forced to retire, and in the place of the Old Art poetry and the Old and New Popular Poetry, we have the Learned Poetry of the modern time, with Martin Opitz at its head. In the midst of the Babel of sounds that now ensues, there is heard one pure genuine German note, high and clear above the rest. This is the “Evangelical Church Hymn.”

As aforesaid, there was a general fight going on between the Old and the New in every department—

in religious and ecclesiastical matters—in morals and public life—in politics and jurisprudence. But in the department of national literature there is not alone a destruction of the old, but also a creation of what is new. Two phenomena catch our attention. A novel kind of Prose now arises, the expression of a new-world consciousness—a prose which was to be the standard and the rule of all prose compositions for centuries to come. And, secondly, we behold the development of Comedy and Satire. Wherever these two have come out strongly, it was a sign that two worlds, an old and a new, were in the throes of separation. With Aristophanes the old Greek world came to an end. The world of Hellenic deeds closed, and the world of Hellenic thought began. And so it is that in German literature Johann Fischart stands as the landmark between the old and the new German world. Thus likewise Persius and Juvenal stand on the boundary between the old Roman world-sovereignty and the new Greco-Roman life of the Empire.

These two phenomena, then, are so essentially peculiar to the sixteenth century, that, though it possesses much in common with the two preceding centuries, it must be considered by itself as a separate period.

From the above it appears that it is clearly an historical mistake to say with the moderns—chiefly those of the Romish party—that the sixteenth century arbitrarily destroyed all the recollections of the old and better German period from mere lust of revolution; or that they ignored and suppressed all the grand old literature out of hatred to Popery. The glory of the

ancient literature had long before this been dimmed. The German world had long been quite dead to the nobler gratification afforded by the poetry of former centuries; and so the writers of the sixteenth century threw away the faded wreath, and forsaking a path which was no longer tenable, struck out a new line, more according with the spirit of the age. The interruption to the progress of German literary culture is much to be lamented; but not less so the degeneracy of national consciousness and the utter destruction of national recollections, the loss of political greatness and political truth, the severance of the old bands of love and gratitude between emperor and prince, prince and nobility, nobility and peasants. All this was on the point of taking place in the sixteenth century, but the blame of it must not be attached solely to the century and its ecclesiastical events.

Theological polemics, it is true, were inimical to the interests of German national poetry; but the foe of all others most destructive to it, for the time being, was the taste for classic erudition, for Greek and Roman philology, which now set in with a zeal and energy truly marvellous: so much so that the sixteenth century is acknowledged to be the golden age of the philologers. For some time the national element was thrown into the shade by the classical and foreign one. At last, however, after a long and tedious process, an amalgamation of the two was effected; and after a period of three hundred years, we have the second classical period of German poetry. Indeed, it is possible that, had not the Greeks and Romans held undisputed sway over German literature for so many

centuries, its modern revival could never have been effected : but of this hereafter.

While the study of Greek and Roman philology was thus in the ascendant, nothing would go down but what savoured of the ancient classics. Public life became, so to say, a great school for making Latin speeches and Latin verses. The real world of action and fact was thrown into the shade by an unreal world of books. The poetry of the people, under such circumstances, was looked upon pretty much in the same light as the invading Romans regarded the poetry of the ancient Germans. In the sixteenth century "a German poet" was a term of reproach. Instead of the history of their forefathers, the young generation had nothing but cramped compendiums of the history of foreign nations placed before them. It seemed, in fact, to be the policy of that age—a policy of which Germany still shows the evil effects—to denationalize the people as much as possible, and make so many antique heathens of them, as far as thought and feeling were concerned.

But although German popular poetry thus deceased, it made a merry end of it. Unaware of its impending dissolution, unconcerned about the contempt and indifference it encountered almost universally among the higher classes, its sallies were as lively, as boisterous, as unrestrained as of yore. The split that separated North and South Germany in religious and ecclesiastical matters, and went to the very heart of the people, seemed to do it no injury. On the contrary, its humour seemed to become more wakeful, more animated, in consequence. At first, Protestants and

Catholics alike preserved the old poetical reminiscences, especially the national song (Volkslied.) But at the close of the sixteenth century the wounds inflicted on the nation began to tell on their poetry. Henceforward the poetic power seemed to reside exclusively with the Protestants in the North of Germany; and, indeed, from that time to the present, it is only in this part of the country that literature generally has taken root and flourished.

We will now proceed to examine the several walks of poetry in detail. The old national epic was just about to expire. Not only was there nothing new written in it, but even the old was forgotten. In the sixteenth century, there could scarcely have been a soul, except the Emperor Maximilian and his secretary, and the learned historian Wolfgang Lazius, who knew a word of the "Nibelungenlied" and "Gudrun." The "Heldenbuch" was reprinted several times, it is true, in the course of the sixteenth century; but in the eyes of the learned it passed for a barbarous old wives' book; and in the beginning of the seventeenth century it was looked upon as a curious piece of antiquity,—indeed, many regard it as such now, and not as what it really is, a bit of the very life and soul of the people. Several of the separate Sagas, *e. g.* those of Dietrich, were also printed;\* but among the learned they were despised

\* The separate sagas were published chiefly in Nuremberg, ("Der Riese Sigenot" by V. Neuber, the "Hildebrandslied" by K. Hergotin, the "Hörnen Sigfried" by G. Wachter); also in Strasburg (the "Sigenot" and "Ecken Ausfahrt" by Christian Müller); at Frankfort (by Wigand Han); occasionally, too, in Lower Germany, but in the Platt-deutsch



even more than the "Heldenbuch." Their small octavo form at once indicated that they were only intended for the illiterate rabble. Sigfrid's "Dragon Fight" was in the mere form of a broadside.

The old Art-Epic was likewise all but defunct. It is true, that at the end of the preceding century a version of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" by Albrecht von Halberstadt\*, a poet of the beginning of the thirteenth century, appeared in print; as likewise Konrad von Würzburg's pretty tale of "Engelhart and Engeltrut."† But the former work found favour chiefly on account of its classical contents. It is somewhat singular that no MS. of either of these works is to be found.

The material of the Artus-saga was also still known; not, however, through the ancient poems, but by the prose German versions from the French. But at the end of this period, *i. e.* about 1620 A.D., both National and Art Epic fell into oblivion, or at the most were only to be found among the miscellaneous stock in trade of travelling hawkers.

dialect (*e. g.* the recently discovered lay of "Ermanrichs Tod"). At Nuremberg these sagas kept being reprinted till late in the seventeenth century. In 1661, Endter, of that city, published "Sigenot" and the "Hildebrandslied."

\* Written A.D. 1210. This was modernised by Georg Wikram, and in this altered shape the poem went through several editions, *e. g.* 1545 and 1581.

† "Engelhart" is based upon the saga of "Amicus and Amelius." Compare Keller, "Le Roman des Sept Sages," p. ccxxxi., and "Diocletianus," p. 63, Mone, "Anzeig." 1838, sp. 145. The tale was published, in a tolerably modest modernisation, at Frankfort, 1573, by Kilian Han, and edited, in 1841, with restored text, by Haupt.

Of the few story-tellers in verse during this century, Hans Sachs\*, the cobbler and Meistersinger of Nuremberg, far excels the rest in fertility, liveliness, and humour, and in the popular nature of his verse. His compositions were of the serious as well as the jocose kind. The former he calls "Histori und Geschicht," the latter "Fabeln und gute Schwenk," fables and good jokes. This remarkable man was and is the best known German poet of the sixteenth century. Creative poet and moulder of the spirit of his age he was not; but he possessed uncommon talent for mastering any given subject. His style is easy and free from stiffness; his tone is gentle and without exaggeration; while his wit and humour are amusing in the extreme. These good qualities are most conspicuous in his secular stories. His dramas stand next. The most that can be said of his sacred compositions, *e. g.* versions of different parts of the Bible, is that they evince a certain mechanical facility in versifying. His Meister-

\* There are three cheap editions of Hans Sachs' works. The first was superintended by himself, in 3 vols. folio, 1558-1561, Nuremberg, George Willer. This contains 789 poetic pieces, and was often republished down to 1591. The second edition, in 5 vols. folio, 1570-1579, Nuremberg, J. Lochner. The two last vols. of this edition contain 580 new pieces, over and above those in the first edition. The third edition, in 5 quarto vols., Kempten, 1612-1617. In 1712 it was republished at Augsburg, with a new title. In this, two pieces respecting the Evangelical Church are wanting. Bertuch, at Weimar, 1778, and Häslein, 1781, and Becker, Gotha, 1821, tried to get up new editions, but failed. Büsching's modernized selection, in 5 vols, 1816-1824, is a failure. Götz's edition, in 4 vols., 1829-30, is fair upon the whole. A reprint of the rare original edition is much wanted. Respecting H. Sachs' unprinted works, see a Programme at Leipzig by Naumann, 1843, and another at Zwickau, by Hertel, 1854.

gesänge are pretty much on a par with those of the other writers in this line. It is evident from his verses that the old traditional form of the short pair of rhymes was not capable of being restored to its ancient glory. Perhaps the new language did not permit of it. Indeed, the technical deficiencies so apparent in many parts of his verse, indicate that the old German art of versification was on the eve of a revolution, such as Opitz afterwards introduced. In spite of this, his merits as a story-teller cannot be gainsayed. All the artificial scribblers of the seventeenth century, and all the conceited poetasters of the eighteenth, who professed to look down on the cobbler of Nuremberg, are immeasurably inferior to him. In rapidity and animation of description, in soundness of feeling and naturalness of expression, he is much above Gellert, and not less superior to the writers of the present day, when the taste for artificial writing has again revived. How simple and yet how vivacious is his "Schlaraffenland" (Utopia); how delicately and yet how inimitably he hits off many of the topics of the day. Nothing of the kind either in High or Low German at all comes near it. Again, his stories of "St. Peter with the Goat" ("St. Peter mit der Geiss"), and "The Lazy Peasant Lad" ("Der faule Bauernknecht"): how naïve and hearty; how sharp and telling! And then, how admirably he describes the busy bustling of a quarrelsome woman in his "Kifferbeskraut!" Here a lover of gardening asks for advice as to what flowers and vegetables he had better plant in his garden. Several sorts of seeds are recommended to him, some for show, some for use; and,

last of all, some Kifferbsen (summer peas). At the mention of these he screams out, "O no Kifferbsen, no Kifferbeskraut!"\* I've enough of that at home. Like weeds, it won't be got rid of. It's never frost-bitten in winter, never burnt up in summer; it grows all over the house. In the cellar, in the bath, in the kitchen, parlour, chamber, Kifferbeskraut gives me endless bother; in the cock-loft worst of all. Whatever my wife's about, there is this everlasting plague. Whether she is washing the children, or carrying water, or baking cakes, setting the kitchen to rights, sweeping the house, making the beds, cleaning feathers, drying flax in the sun, scouring the pans, or having a wash, the weed straight grows apace, till I get in such a stew that I'm fairly lost. My wife gives me such a lot of it—fills me, chokes me with it, so that I devoutly wish it had never been sown. Yes, curse it and confound it, root and branch; many a good fellow would be so heartily glad."

But it is not in domestic scenes only that he excels. The peculiarities of artizan life are likewise inimitably described. The tailor throws great pieces of cloth to the mouse, and is horrified in a dream to see the Devil with a huge flag made of all the odds and ends of cloth which he (the tailor) had ever "sent to the mouse" (*i. e.*, purloined as his perquisite :) Upon this he vows by all that is most sacred he will never throw anything to the mouse again. For a long time

\* There is a punning allusion in Kifferbsen to the word "keifen," to scold. To make it intelligible, we may translate it by "scarlet-runner," which facetious persons might apply to a scolding woman's tongue.  
—*Editor.*

he keeps his vow, till at last he gets a piece of gold brocade to make up. The other journeymen tailors remind him of the flag; upon which he observes he does not think there is any gold brocade in the flag; and forthwith flies a great piece after the mouse. At last the tailor dies, and St. Peter, out of compassion, permits him to sit behind the stove in heaven. One day, peeping out of his corner down upon the earth below, he sees a woman stealing a piece of cloth, and hurls the Almighty's footstool at her, which makes her hump-backed for life. Presently his escapade is discovered, and the Lord says to him, "Oh, tailor, tailor! suppose I had thrown my footstool at you every time you stole the folk's cloth and threw it after the mouse. Why, your house would not have had a tile left on it by this time, and you would have been on crutches, with your back bent and legs crooked. How dare you throw, then, you vulgar fellow!"

Our worthy poet confines himself in this manner to a description of the customs and notions actually prevalent among the middle and lower classes, and therein displays his poetic powers to considerable advantage. He often borrows from other authors, ancient and modern, who had become known through the medium of translations; and the wonder is that a cobbler could ever have read so much, and that he could have dressed up what he borrowed with such propriety. In Germany the interest taken in him has never been equal to his deserts. In the days of the Reformation he may be said to have represented the Burgher party, which was in favour of that movement, and he enjoyed

the esteem of Melancthon. His poem, "Die Wittenbergische Nachtigall," was written in 1523, in honour of the good cause, which he did much to promote among the citizens of Nuremberg.

Among the race of erudite poets that now followed he fell into contempt, being considered the very ideal of bad rhymers. "Hans Sachsë was a cobbler and poet all in one," was a line in everybody's mouth. Hoffmannswaldau, however, was alive to his real merits. But it was Goethe who emphatically called attention to the Volkslied (popular poetry), and the value of Hans Sachs. Wieland, too, although he had little in common with the poet of Nuremberg, was very sensible of his worth. To give an idea of his fertility, we may mention that, in the months of July, August, and September, 1563, *i. e.*, in the poet's sixty-ninth year, he wrote four-and-twenty "Geschichten und Schwänke" and six religious pieces, besides "Meistergesänge," and that many of the first-mentioned are among his best compositions. From 1514 to 1569 he never relaxed this poetical activity, so that it is not difficult to conceive how that, two years earlier than this (1567), he had already written 208 comedies and tragedies, 1,700 humorous stories (Schwänke), and 4,200 master songs. We have little difficulty in summing them up, for, with the business-like habit of a burgher, he not only affixes his name to all his pieces, but likewise the year and very day of their composition. Of course many of these pieces betray symptoms of hurry, and other imperfections. But this remark applies least to his printed pieces, as he himself selected these from the rest with



the most scrupulous nicety, taking care to exclude from the press every one of his master songs. Many of the poets of the seventeenth century, and of a still later date, would have done well to have imitated him in this respect. In his eightieth year, he lost his hearing and speech, and became imbecile. One of his grateful pupils relates how the old man used to sit, his hair and beard snow-white, with his great book open on the desk before him, just giving a bow to visitors, and regarding them with mild and friendly countenance, until at last he fell gently asleep, on the 25th January 1576, in the eighty-second year of his age.

The other noticeable story-teller of the sixteenth century is Johann Fischart, named Menzer, who was one of the first spirits of the century. His poem, which we have here to mention, gives a description of the voyage of the Zurich Rifle Club from thence to Strasburg, in one day of the month of June 1576; and, in proof of the rapidity of the transit, a kettle of millet broth, which had been cooked at Zurich, was still warm when they got to Strasburg. "Das glückhafte Schiff von Zürich," (the Lucky Ship of Zurich,)\* is the title of the piece. The descriptions are remarkably truthful and life-like; the language is noble, and full of pith and concentration. Besides, the poet conceives the whole from a high point of view. It is his

\* It was re-edited, 1828, by K. Halling. The explanations in it, however, are worthless, and the catalogue of Fischart's writings deficient. Compare the article "Fischart," in the "Allg. Encyclopädie von Ersch und Gruber."

object to show what can be done by energy and strength of will; the straightforwardness of the confederate burghers, and the importance of friendly intercourse between the different cities, are also put before the reader. In fact, the poem is not only the best of the narrative kind during this and the two next centuries, but it is among the best that was ever written in this line in German.

Of the remaining narrative poems of this period none deserves to be mentioned. Valentin Andrea, in his "Christenburg," attempts to imitate Fischart; but he is much too allegorical and long-winded.\*

Animal Epic also was known to the age which we are now describing by the poem "Reinecke Vos," and even the learned world took favourable notice of it, but with that taste for satire, then so prevalent, only as a species of satirical poetry. This view of it originated an entirely new sort of poetry, which, though inferior to the genuine animal epic, nevertheless exercised a very sensible influence on Germany from that day to this. We allude to the so-called "Allegoric-Satiric-Animal" Poem, which holds an intermediate place between Animal Epic and Fable, and is peculiar to the period now under consideration. The chief specimens in it are G. Rollenhagen's "Frosch-

\* Johann Valentin Andrea was a theologian of importance as far as the inner history of the evangelical church is concerned. He was a really learned person, and therefore opposed to the useless learning of his time. He was greatly admired by Spener, and Herder has called special attention to him. His "Christenburg," written 1620, was rediscovered lately, and published by Grüneisen in Illgen's "Zeitschrift für historische Theologie," vol. vi. 1.

meuseler," Fischart's "Flohatz," C. Fuchs' "Ameisen und Mückenkrieg," W. Spangenberg's "Ganskönig," and Rose von Kreuzheim's "Eselkönig," the last in prose. To some of these the above designation will hardly apply. The liveliest and wittiest of them, for instance, Fischart's "Flohatz," is a purely *comic* poem, especially in the first half of it; anything but satiric or allegorical; least of all didactic. The subject, as the name imports, are the small animals that plague humanity; and the sufferings they inflict upon a traveller in Italy are described with incomparable reality and humour. The compassion which the victim stands in need of, but which it is impossible to give him, forms a truly comic antithesis. Of course there is no lack of coarseness about it, a thing inseparable from low comedy. So popular was it in 1577 that the copies were laid hands on and thumbed to pieces as they came out of the press, which accounts for the paucity of copies of it at the present day, notwithstanding the many editions that appeared.\* To the "Froschmeuseler," on the contrary, the appellation of allegoric-satiric-didactic may correctly apply. Rollenhagen wrote it about 1560, but it was first printed in 1595; since then frequently. According to the author, this poem is intended as a sort of *Weltspiegel* (mirror of the world), and is based on Homer's "*Batrachomachia*." The introduction is thoroughly epic, with familiar and tender sympathy for the animal kingdom. Presently the animal epic ceases, and the beasts that

\* "Flohatz" appeared in numerous editions before 1577, but they are all lost. After 1577 six editions are known.

appear are nothing but men in disguise, who converse about all sorts of things secular and spiritual, *e. g.*, on the papacy and alchymy, treasure-digging, and the advantages of monarchy, with numerous illustrations from the world of fable. It is not till near the end, when the frogs and mice fight, that the story again inclines to the epic. The poetic effect of the whole loses from the abundance of allegory; but the style is animated, the language pure, and the versification clever; and the descriptions are careful and clear, so that the "Froschmeuseler" may be considered what it always has been, one of the best poetic products of the sixteenth century. The greater part of it might be read with advantage even now.

The other poems are less noteworthy. The "Ganskönig," by Spangenberg, son of the well-known historian and theologian of that name, is in praise of roast Martinmas goose, and the only epic part about it is the preamble, when the birds debate whom they shall choose for a king. But even this part is all speeches, and no action. The language is good and the verse flowing. It appeared at Strasburg in 1607, *i. e.*, at the extreme limit of the period which we are considering.

Fuchs' "Ameisen und Mückenkrieg," afterwards altered by one Pastor Balthasar Schnurr, of Schmalkald, is a fair version of a macaronic poem (Italian and Latin).\* The "Eselkönig" (King of the Asses)

\* It is an imitation of the "Moscaea" of Teofilo Folengo (which last was imitated in Spanish by J. Villaviciosa, see Huber "Span. Lesebuch," 1832, p. 403). It was published first at Schmalkald, 1580; Schnurr's

is not a bad satire (in prose) on the biped namesakes of that animal, who attain to riches and honour without deserving it. But it is not very important.\*

Akin to the animal epic is the didactic fable. Of this there are two representatives, Erasmus Alberus and Burkard Waldis, both natives of Hessia, and both clergymen. The former died at Neubrandenburg in Mecklenburg. Waldis, after being a monk, led a desultory life, and at last became Vicar of Abterode.

It is not in the invention of new animal fables that their chief merit lay, but in their method of description: that of Alberus is lengthy, but correct; while that of Waldis is very lively and humorous. The former only wrote forty-nine fables†, while the latter has left versions of three hundred fables from other languages. It now becomes the fashion more than in the case of the Stricker, to give, after the manner of Æsop and Phædrus, under the title of fables, short epigrammatic tales from real life, humorous stories, jests, &c., which is the case with the three hundred

version, 1612; re-edited by Genthe, 1833, and with a new title, in 1846.

\* Published at Ballenstädt about 1617-1620. A specimen of it appears in Wackernagel, 3, 1, sp. 605-620.

† "Das Buch von der Tugent und Weisheit, &c. durch Erasmum Alberum," 1550. Alberus was probably not born at Staden (afterwards priest there), though educated there. Hence he calls the inhabitants "his countrymen." He wrote most of his fables in the quiet period of his life, while a schoolmaster at Ursel (1525-1527), and clergyman at Sprendlingen (1527-1528). He says he wrote them "in his youth," and now publishes them (1550, while he was at Magdeburg), "revised and corrected." A few fresh notices on his life, by H. Fallersleben, appeared in the "Mecklenburgisches Volksbuch" of 1846, p. 187.

fables of Waldis.\* The fourth hundred are his own composition, with the exception of a few specimens, one of which, ("Die Betfart des Esels in Gesellschaft des Fuchses und Wolfes,") belongs to the old animal epic. All these are made up of merry tales, jokes, and anecdotes, mostly of the day. Some, however, are traditionary, as, for instance, the tale of the swineherd who becomes an abbot, and which partly belongs to the Saga of "Pfaff Amis," and from which Bürger drew the materials of his "The Emperor and the Abbot." In the same way Hagedorn, Gellert, and Zachariä got the best of their materials from the fables of the old Parson of Abterode. Of didactic and descriptive poems there was no lack in these days. Hans Sachs' "Landsknechts-Spiegel" vividly portrays the life of these wild soldiers. Fischart and Bartholomäus Ringwald are also worthy of mention.

Fischart's didactic poems are superior to any of the sixteenth century; and indeed, in some respects, to any didactic pieces of modern times. Many of them are to be found in a volume of his, the first half of which contains a translation of Plutarch's work on marriage, the second half an original treatise by Fischart himself on domestic life. It is remarkable with what delicacy this greatest of German satirists paints the happiness and tranquillity of home; the quiet

\* Waldis was rector of Abterode from September 13th, 1544, and must have died 1555, or soon after. His "Fabelbuch" appeared 1548. "Esopus gantz neuw gemacht, &c. durch B. Waldis," often republished. The newest and best account of Waldis is given by Mittler in the "Hessisches Jahrbuch" of 1855. 231, (also in a separate form). A drama by Waldis, "Der verlorene Sohn," was re-edited by Hoefer, 1851.



indoor occupations, the gentleness, the untiring industry, of the genuine housewife. Prose and verse alike are replete with earnestness and tenderness. The following extracts in proof of our opinion.\* “Therefore a husband should treat his wife with consideration. He must not be rude to her, but mild and faithful. For rudeness only breeds shyness, and shyness broken vows, and then comes remorse. But kindness and gentleness will make her true and willing. A man must not be a storm-wind to turn the house upside down, but imitate the sun’s wit, which works not by sudden but by gradual heat,” &c.

And then of the wife:—“When he shouts she’ll be silent. When he’s silent, then she’ll speak to him. Is he heated, she’ll be cool. Is he furious, she’ll be calm. Is he moody, she will soothe him. Is he impetuous, she’ll be gentle. Does he rage, she will yield. Is he savage, she is meek. He is the sun, she is the moon. She’s the night, he has the might of day. That which the sun has parched by day the night doth cool by the moon’s power. Unless this is done, then, as the proverb says, ‘Two hard stones never grind small.’ A wise woman lets the man storm; but, on the other hand, she’ll not let him sulk long, but by gentle ways and friendly speech she’ll loosen his tongue by times.”

With equal warmth and force, and no less tenderness, he describes the relations that ought to subsist between Christian parents and their children. Parental

\* These passages occur in the “Ehzuchtbüchlein,” 1578, A. 7 b. and D. 6 a.

and filial joys and duties have never been better described than in the short poem of scarcely two hundred lines, which until lately was unknown.\* Nothing can be sweeter and more truthful than his praise of country life and that favourite instrument, the lute; while his "Earnest Advice to his dear Fellow-countrymen," wherein he talks of "das Deutsche Adlergemüth," is an appeal to national honour so forcible and solemn, that three centuries have not produced its equal. It is to be found in Wackernagel's "Lesebuch."

Bartholomäus Ringwald, pastor of Lengefeld, in the Altmark, lived a little later. His poem, "Die lautere Warheit," prescribes the duties of a worldly and spiritual warrior. Here we have a vivid picture of the state of Germany in those days, with its dissensions, drunkenness, frivolity, and love of gorgeous apparel. Though earnest in tone, the piece does not lack humour and vivacity. The language is pure, and the verse tolerably fluent. It soon became a favourite in North Germany; and between 1585 and 1598 went through ten editions. His other didactic poem, "Der treue Eckart" (a vision of Heaven and Hell), is a capital portrait of contemporary manners. The vanity of a fine lady is hit off with the utmost sharpness and simplicity.

In the period which we are now describing, we have Meistergesang sticking tenaciously to its old groove, and gradually stiffening into incurable rigidity; while

\* The "Anmanung zu christlicher Kinderzucht" was published by Vilmar in the "Zur Literatur J. Fischarts," 1846; is also to be found in the excellent work of Below and Zacher, "J. Fischart's Geistliche Lieder, Christliche Kinderzucht und Lob der Lauten," Berlin, 1849.

the "Volkslied," which originated in the preceding period, in this period blooms and dies.

The only poet who could infuse the slightest breath of life into the old artificial forms of the old Minne-gesang, is Burkard Waldis, the Hessian. He composed a version of the whole Psalter in old Minnesinger fashion, but in the tripartite strophe. The prominent faults of the Master-singers, their stiffness und clumsiness, their painful minuteness and precision, are here not in the least observable. Many of these psalms continued to be sung in churches throughout the seventeenth century, some even to our times.

In the midst of these fruitless attempts to revive the art of ancient days, we see indications of the new era which was to be inaugurated by Opitz fifty years later, in the choice of ancient and romance metres, and in the exuberant use of epithets.

Paul Melissus, whose real name was Schede, and who was endowed with considerable poetic powers, was the first person of any note to introduce classic poetry into Germany. In the beginning of the second half of the sixteenth century he composed the first German sonnets and "Terzines." He also wrote Iambics and Trochaics, wherein he affected the elegance of the modern Latin poets. His language is at times stilted, and almost monstrous; but his expressions are often apt and true. His chief work is a version of the first fifty psalms.

But the noblest production of the German lyric muse in the sixteenth century, is the "Evangelical Church Hymn."

In the oldest times, the only part the community

took in church music was to sing the Kyrie eleison in the Litany. Later they sang short strophes in processions. The brilliant poets of the thirteenth century did nothing towards bringing the *people* to participate in religious song. In those days they got no further than the religious lay, with its deep reflections on the mysteries of Heaven, of the Creation and of Redemption; its brilliant descriptions of the wonders of the Holy Trinity, the grace and sublimity of the Mother of God, and the glories of eternal life. In such topics as these the mind of the singer was absorbed.

These compositions were never meant to be introduced into the Church Liturgy, nor were they adapted for it. Church song was, and continued to be, Latin, and was under the auspices of the ecclesiastical authorities. It was epic in its nature, dwelling on the Almighty's works—Creation, Redemption, Sanctification—in an abstracted point of view, without alluding to the effect of those things on the hearts of men. The admirable productions of Latin hymnic in this line are well known.

But towards the middle of the fourteenth, and still more in the beginning of the fifteenth century, ecclesiastical song like lyric poetry began to adapt themselves to the wants of the people, while the great truths of Christianity were enunciated in simpler speech; the Christian joy and Christian sorrow, not of individuals, but of the mass, also found utterance. Many of these Church hymns assumed the identical form of national songs (Volkslied). Indeed, many secular songs were, by an easy process, transformed into

religious songs, *e. g.*, the pieces of the monk, Johann von Salzburg and Heinrich von Laufenberg. So also the lay "In dulci Jubilo."

The very essence of the Reformation was that it made a sense of sin, and redemption by Jesus Christ, a matter for the heart of each individual man. It is personal experience of sin and of mercy upon which it lays so much stress. The middle wall of partition between clergy and laity is broken down; for whatever may be the diversity of spiritual gifts accorded to each, to all alike the same means of salvation are open. And in this sense it is that the Reformation was a truly popular phenomenon. And hence her poetry—the "Evangelical Church Hymn"—is also popular in the strictest signification. What was said before of popular poetry, epic as well as lyric, applies with equal force to it. It describes only what the writer has really felt, really experienced, or rather only what is true of all alike, what all have felt and experienced. Sorrow for sin, the assurance of salvation, the heavenly joy of the Christian's heart, the feeling of "Thou art mine and I am thine, and none shall part us"—all these, as they convulsed the soul, find their quick utterance in the "Church Hymn." It is the very outpouring of the bottom of the heart. Standing still, contemplation, picturing and describing, tropes and erudition are as foreign to the genuine "Evangelical Hymn" as they were to the old popular epic. In form, too, it is popular. The Hildebrandston, the tripartite strophe, and the short pairs of rhymes, all of them long recognised vehicles of popular poetry, are the dress

which the real "Evangelical Church Hymn" of the sixteenth century exclusively wore, and continued to wear, at least its best specimens, in the succeeding period. Add to this, as above hinted, many of these hymns adopt the tone and style, and even the melody of secular poems of those days. Thus the air of "O Welt, ich muss dich lassen!" which is the same as the modern "Nun ruhen alle Wälder," is akin to that of "Insbruck, ich muss dich lassen." So, "Herzlich thut mich verlangen," one of the most beautiful dirges of the close of this period, reminds us of the older spiritual song, "Herzlich thut mich erfreuen," which last is nothing more nor less than a metamorphosis of the summer song, "Herzlich thut mich erfreuen die liebe Sommerzeit." So in the song, "Es ist das Heil uns kommen her," there are direct references to the old hero-song then in vogue among the people.

The people's love for their earthly monarchs and heroes, which had been so long preserved in popular lay, was now, in the "Evangelical Hymn," transferred to the King of Heaven, and the strong Hero who had conquered death. The feelings of humanity, joy, grief, constancy, were centered not on worldly but heavenly objects; and thus the popular song was hallowed by the Gospel. It cannot be said, however, that the Church made the *material* of the popular lay its own. It is not the substance, but rather the spirit of the people's lay which has passed over into the sacred song. Above all, it must be remembered that, as in the secular, so in the spiritual lay, the melody is intimately



bound up with the text. It is song that makes the hymn everything,—the united voice of the people. Regarded in this light, as a holy popular song (not poem), we can understand the almost magical effect which it produced on the masses in the days of the Reformation. Hardly was one of these pieces composed before it was sung at every door; the minstrel was surrounded by a multitude, who caught up the melody, and before he had got to the end of his song chimed in with loud and joyful tones. Thus it spread like wild-fire to every church, to every hearth, and made thousands of converts to the evangelical faith. Luther's songs, "Nun freut euch liebe Christen gmein," "Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu Dir;" Paul Speratus's "Es ist das Heil uns kommen her;" Nicolaus Decius's "Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr," were borne, as it were, on the wings of the wind from one end of Germany to the other, were drunk in by hearts thirsting for the tidings of salvation, and at once were imprinted fast on the memories of the people—men, women, and children alike—by them to be handed down to succeeding generations. Nothing so true, so mighty in operation, so edifying, so original, so affecting all and belonging to all, can ever be produced by any succeeding age. For the true standard of genuine church lyrics we must always revert to the Reformation. It is only the true Evangelical Church Hymn that breathes that lively, that practical, that personal interest in the God-head, which constitutes its very essence. The Moravian hymns are more explanatory and doctrinal, and

therefore often dry and tedious. One only, which is as popular now as it was in 1550, surpasses all the rest, "Nun lasst uns den Leib begraben." The later Evangelical hymns, too, are often mere repetitions of the original and early ones. The best lays of all are by Luther himself, Paul Speratus, Nicolaus Decius, and Paul Eber, in the first half and middle of the sixteenth century; then those of Nikolaus Hermann, Martin Schalling, Bartholomäus Ringwald, Ludwig Helmbold, Philipp Nicolai, Johann Pappus, Christoph Knoll, and Valerius Herberger, in the second half of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. The theme of all these older hymns is the universal Evangelical faith, without any special reference to peculiar circumstances. The grave events of succeeding times, the plague, and the Thirty Year's War, gave birth to the heartfelt "Kreuz- und Trost-Lieder" (Lays of the Cross and of Comfort), which, in fact, are the only poetic productions of the seventeenth century.

Before proceeding to consider the Comedy and Satire of this period, a few words on the development of the German drama. If the national consciousness had continued strong enough in itself, and had also not been weakened by erudition on the one hand, and religious struggles on the other, that would have perhaps happened in Germany which happened in ancient Greece. The Sagas of Sigfried, Dietrich, and Hildebrand would have been dramatized, in the same manner as Euripides and Sophocles dramatized the heroes of Troy and the tale of *Œdipus*. It is the province of the dramatist, in fact, as we learn from the Greeks, not to invent, but

to clothe materials, traditionary and well known to all the people, with a flesh-and-blood interest, in keeping with the ideas of the age in which he lives, while he preserves the ancient likeness. Thus, the best modern German dramas are based on popular and traditionary materials, *e.g.* Goethe's "Götz von Berlichingen," and especially his "Faust." So Schiller's "Wallenstein" and "Wilhelm Tell."

The reason, however, that no satisfactory parallel can be established between the growth of the Greek and the German drama, is, that at the time when, according to the usual course of things, drama ought to have arisen in Germany, the popular poetic elements, the old hero Sagas, were on the point of becoming obsolete with the people, and were ignored by the intellectual aristocracy. And so the days, when it was possible to have constructed a national drama, went by, and even the examples of Schiller and Goethe, in after times, have availed but little.

If, instead of writing elegant Latin verses, which nobody reads now-a-days, Cobanus Hessus and Euricius Cordus, or Frischlin (who did write Latin dramas) had made better use of their poetic powers,—had dramatized subjects like the death of Sigfrid, or Margrave Rudiger, or the Death of the Sons of Etzel, or Hildebrand and his Son, or Otnit and Hugdietrich, or even Duke Ernest, how different the German drama would have been. The sixteenth century might then, perhaps, have produced a German Shakespeare.

It is true that Hans Sachs, with his characteristic sound sense and right tact, took up some of these

national subjects, and actually made the Death of Sigfrid the topic of a drama. About the same time, also (1545), the history of Tell was produced and acted as a drama in Switzerland;\* and in the beginning of the seventeenth century Jacob Ayrer, of Nuremberg, dramatized Otnit and Hugdietrich. But these isolated attempts fell flat on an age devoted to nought but antique learning. Contemptuous pedants pronounced these remarkable experiments to be old wives' tales. And so it was that the following age had to begin the task anew with no better success. A third attempt in the eighteenth century was equally fruitless, until at last Lessing struck out the only way towards a drama, if not a national one. We shall merely remark, further, that there are considerable merits in the dramatic productions of Hans Sachs, especially in his "Fastnachtspiele" (Shrove-tide plays). The dialogue is often lively, and the action truthful and rapid. Ayrer's pieces are ruder and coarser.

And now for the comic and satirical writings of this period, which, as we shall find, were its natural characteristic and production; for these two, as we have hinted above, always have been, and always will be, the birth of an age when an old state of things is passing away, and all is becoming new—when, consequently, everything teems with incongruities and contradictions. It

\* "Ein hüpsch und lustig Spyl vorzyten gehalten zu Vry, von dem frommen und ersten Eidgenossen, W. Thellen," ed. F. Meyer, 1843. Concerning the Jacob Ayrer there mentioned, and his "Opus Theatricum" (1618), see Helbig, in Prutz's "Literar. Taschenbuch," 1847, p. 441; also Tieck's "Deutsches Theater," and Henneberger's "Jahrbuch," 1855, p. 32; also Schmitt, "Jacob Ayrer," 1851.

was so with the irony of Socrates; it was so with the undying comedy of Aristophanes. They stood on the debateable ground between two totally distinct worlds of Greek culture. So it was in Germany in the sixteenth century. A revolution in everything was in progress, and the offspring of it were men like Brant, Hutten, Murner, Fischart — books like “Eulenspiegel” and “Lalenbuch,” “Faust” and “Fortunatus.” There never was such a century of unextinguishable laughter as the sixteenth, in spite of all its bitter struggles and storms. No century was ever so addicted to animal excess, to inordinate eating and drinking, and yet at the same time so full of earnestness and depth of feeling—so replete with austere learning and untiring zeal—so capable of resignation and self-sacrifice. Never was there a period when, with such a consciousness of order and morality, immorality and lewdness were more rampant—where, side by side with the most elegant and refined modern tastes, was witnessed so much brutality and coarseness of demeanour. Low avarice and utter indifference about money and possessions—love of home and domestic quiet and insatiate desire for roaming; these, and many more, were among the striking contradictions of the times. Of course comedy must not describe these anomalies by halves, but set them down in all their glaring contrast. And so there is nothing tame about the satire of those days, no glossing over matters, but it advances to its task just as it ought, unsparing, vigorous, undismayed.

Foremost among these satirists stands Sebastian

Brant, syndic of Strasburg, whose "Ship of Fools" was written as early as 1494. But he is best mentioned here because he it was that gave the tone which prevailed through the whole of the sixteenth century. His work is called "Ship of Fools," because there were so many that no carriage could hold them; and here they come from all sides, wading and swimming towards the ship, for fear of being left behind. But whoever looks upon himself as a fool is not taken on board—only those who fancy themselves witty. One hundred and thirteen sorts of fools are admitted. Each one is fitted with a cap set with bells exactly to his measure. Brant takes the lead himself, in the capacity of book-fool, a personage then so common,—one who has many books, and is everlastingly purchasing more, without ever reading or understanding them. Then comes the miser-fool, dandy-fool, honour-fool, old fool, &c., many of them sketched sharply, and to the life; some, however, but poorly. The versification is a disjointed and degenerate sort of short pairs of rhymes. It is written in the hard and rude dialect of Alsace, but which possessed the advantage of having more derisive nicknames in it than any other dialect of Germany. The book took wonderfully, and went through many editions and reprints. It was translated into Low German (Platt Deutsch) and Latin, and imitated in German and Latin. Its jokes and aphorisms were soon in everybody's mouth, and Geiler of Kaisersberg even made it the theme of several sermons. And as a true mirror and uncompromising lasher of contemporary vices, the book well deserved its reputa-



tion; although, of course, many of its allusions are necessarily lost upon us. It is a pity that the new edition by Strobel, of Strasburg, has done so little to clear up the difficulties.\*

Brant died in 1530; but, previously to this, Strasburg had produced a rival in the same line. This was Thomas Murner, a Franciscan monk, who, in biting wit, keen satire, largeness of view, and poetic animation, surpassed Brant. There was an uneasiness in his character which kept him always on the move from place to place, concocting all sorts of schemes and plans, always envious and dissatisfied, proud and obstinate, fomenting discords wherever he came. Hence the air of rude and coarse defiance, instability, and impatience of control which pervades his works. In spite of all this, he is one of the greatest masters of satire that Germany has produced.

According to his own account,† he wrote his “Narrenbeschwörung” (exorcism of fools) in the year 1508, the idea of which he evidently took from Brant’s “Narrenschiff,” though it is by no means a slavish imitation of that work, as Gervinus and others erroneously imagine. Next followed his “Schelmenzunft”

\* An excellent edition of Brant’s “Narrenschiff” appeared in 1854, by Zarncke.

† Murner says in his book, printed at the end of 1522, “Von dem grossen Lutherischen Narren:”—“Full fourteen years ago I exorcised the little fools only.” So that there may have been an edition of the “Narrenbeschwörung” in 1506. The first known edition is that of 1512. Of “Das Buch vom gross. Luth. Narren,” two editions appeared in 1848, by Kurz, with good explanations; and also in Scheible’s collection, “Das Kloster,” vol. x. In vol. viii. of the same work Murner’s “Gäuchmatt” is also printed.

(guild of rogues), full of the most caustic wit, and not without passages of reckless and unnecessary coarseness. It is an epitome of some of his sermons preached at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, which, to judge from appearances, must have been tolerably coarse. The object of his fiercest and most successful onslaughts are the monks and their hypocrisy. After this he wrote some other satirical works, *e. g.*, "Die Badenfurt," "Die Gäuchmatte," "Die Mühle von Schwindelsheim." About this time Luther made his appearance on the scene. Before long Murner (who had translated Luther's work on the Babylonian Captivity into German), arriving at the conviction that Luther was a deceiver of the people and a destroyer of the faith, fell foul of the great reformer and his party with all the force of his satire. His remarkable treatise, written in the year 1522, "Von dem grossen Lutherischen Narren wie ihn Dr. Murner beschworen hat," went beyond all his previous efforts. Owing to the great scarcity of copies of this, his most important work, many of the critics, who never saw it, have formed very false ideas of Murner as a writer. As a satire on the Reformation, it excels all other works for the vigour and undeviating pertinacity with which it pursues the object in view, and the only writings on the Protestant side that can be put in the balance against it are those of Fischart. The polished Fischart, with his imperturbable good temper, and calm smile of conscious superiority, of course has the better of the Franciscan monk, with his coarse and frantic bitterness. But it cannot be denied that Murner, who does not enter upon the inward

essence of the Reformation, deals the most skilful and deadly blows at its external weaknesses. Such were, for instance, the rage for iconoclasm; the attempts made, chiefly by Von Hutten to upset all order, social as well as ecclesiastical; the empty cries of the mob for liberty, verity, and the Gospel. No doubt there are passages in it of uncommon coarseness, but even the most unseemly expressions are not without poetic justification, and the work by no means deserves the appellation of pasquinade, given it by Gervinus. The descriptions are springy and animated beyond measure, though his versification is harsher and language more rugged even than Brant's. Compared with this poetical effusion, Murner's prose works on the same subject are of much less mark, alike in breadth and matter.

Ulrich von Hutten's world-renowned satires on the opposite side, and the "*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*," in which this remarkable man also had a share, were written originally in Latin, and therefore hardly belong to a history of German literature. Indeed, many of them are untranslatable; while in others, which were translated under the superintendence of the author, the wit has lost much of its point. His "*Klagrede*," moreover, is rather a lecture than a satire; and it is uncertain whether certain prose writings that have been attributed to him, *e.g.*, "*Der Karsthans*" (or peasant with the axe), was really by him or not. Be this as it may, it was this piece which drew forth Murner's chief work just mentioned.

Many other works in German and Latin of the days

of the Reformation have nothing comic or satirical about them but the title-page. Such, for instance, are "Der Barfüßer Mönche Eulenspiegel und Alkoran," by Erasmus Alberus, and C. Spangenberg's "Wider die bösen sieben ins Teufels Karnöffelspiel." In the latter part of the sixteenth century there was quite a passion for giving ridiculous and unmeaning titles of this sort to dry polemical treatises.

With Johann Fischart (named Menzer) we shall now pass from the poetry to the prose works of this period. It was in 1570 that he first began to make a noise in the world as a writer of satire. Indeed, he is the greatest satirist of Germany. He wrote both in poetry and prose. Like the two authors just mentioned, Brant and Murner, he was of Strasburg, so that Alsace is quite the home of German satire. In 1570 he wrote "Der Nachtrabe, oder die Nebelkräh" (the night-raven or mist-crow) against one Jacob Rabe, who had become a pervert to Popery; and, soon after, some satirical poems in rhyme on the Franciscans and Dominicans ("Der Barfüßer Sekten und Küttenstreit," and "Von St. Dominici des Predigermönchs und St. Francisci artlichem Leben"), as well as other pieces, some of which have been lost. In 1579 appeared his version of Philip Marnix von Aldegonde's Dutch work, "Beyencorff der roomscher Kerke," under the title of "Bienenkorb des Heiligen römischen Immenschwarms, seiner Hummelszellen oder Himmelszellen, Hurnausnester, Bramenschwürm und Wespengetös," (the Holy Roman bee-hive, with its drone-cells and Heaven-cells,

its hornets' nests, swarms of gadflies and buzzing wasps), a work which went through numerous editions and reprints, and is the best known Fischart ever wrote. At last, in the year 1580, appeared "Das Vierhörnige Jesuiterhütlein," in rhymes, the wittiest and most caustic satire on the Jesuits that has ever been written.\*

He soon took, and with far greater success, to compositions of a more secular nature, using Rabelais as his model; as, for instance, in his witty satire (written 1573) upon the prevailing rage for astrology and horoscope-casting, &c. Rabelais, on the other hand, had imitated some older German writer. "Aller Praktik Grossmutter" are the first words of the long-winded title of Fischart's book on the above subject. His most important work appeared 1575, being a version of part of "Gargantua and Pantagruel," under the title of "Affenteuerliche ungeheuerliche Geschichtschrift," which title was altered in the third edition. His comic work, "Podagramisches Trostbüchlein," is also an imitation, but not of Rabelais. It is entirely free from all indelicacy and coarseness. His "Catalogus Catalogorum," in the manner of Rabelais, appeared

\* In 1845 a new edition of Fischart's "Jesuiter-Hütlein" appeared (Leipsig, Engelmann) under the title of "Jesu-Wider, &c." It was a reprint of the edition of 1603, with all its typographical errors and uncalled-for alterations. In Scheible's "Kloster," vol. x. p. 907, there is another edition of it after that of 1591. In vol. viii. *ibid.* is Fischart's "Geschichtklitterung," after the edition of 1617 (whereas the edition of 1582 is the only one that ought to have been used), and likewise his "Aller Praktik Grossmutter," but this is entirely after the edition of 1623. In the tenth volume are "Flohatz," "Ehezuchtbüchlein," and the "Podagramisches Trostbüchlein," with several other smaller pieces of Fischart's.

shortly before his death in 1589. It is an attack upon the monstrous book-learning and rage for books prevailing at the time, and in exuberance of wit is thought by Vilmar to surpass the productions of the greatest of French satirists

The most striking peculiarity of Fischart is his despotic power over the German language. He made it supply him with new expressions, and twisted it about in a most extraordinary manner to suit his purposes. In those days, when nobody read more than the title-pages of books, the names he gave to his were cited as curiosities.\* It is a mistake, however, to suppose that he deals in mere shallow verbal witticisms. There is a depth, a strength, and a point in his mad verbal escapades, which makes the fools of all times tremble. In English it is quite impossible to convey an adequate idea of his marvellous style. It is a series of surprises. After a long facetious preamble, he comes down with the rapidity of a harpoon. His antics are those of Proteus. Now soft and gentle, now imperious and haughty. This moment smiling coaxingly like an infant, the next grinning like a tiger-cat. Now sad and melancholy, now bursting out into loud laughter. Now full of sober earnestness, now teeming with wanton ribaldry. One thing only he has not—tears. To compare this coarse, angular, sharp Fischart, a very satirist born, with the dreaming, loving, gentle Jean Paul, as Horn has done, is a mistake.

\* Justus George Schottel, one of the most important German grammarians of the seventeenth century, thus cites Fischart's "Gargantua," in his "Arbeit von der teutschen Hauptsprache," 1663, p. 379.



Fischart mirrors forth with wonderful exactness the contradictions and anomalies of his age: the greatness and the littleness of the then Germany; the bookish wisdom of the would-be learned and the rude ignorance of the crowd; the new world of foreign culture side by side with the traditionary recollections of the country; the pompous circumlocution of the semi-Latin statesman and the wild noisy rattle of the midnight carouse. In him we have a concentration of all the people life of the sixteenth century. He is a very mine of information about their customs and language, love and hatred, joke and jest, proverbs and anecdotes, songs and lays. Like a genuine satirist, he also abounds in local and contemporary allusions, which it is quite impossible to decipher without throwing one's self completely into the ideas of the sixteenth century.

It will not be advisable, if indeed it were possible, to give here an analysis of his *chef-d'œuvre*, "Gargantua." Gargantua, as is well known, was a figure taken by Rabelais from the old French Saga and clothed by him in modern dress, with a view of representing the follies and eccentricities, the deformities and monstrosities, of his time. Fischart follows Rabelais, but makes his Gargantua infinitely more grotesque and satirical.

The book contains a world of information, serious and comic, upon the sixteenth century. His "Bienenkorb" (bee-hive) is also capital. It takes the Protestant side of the question, while Murner's "Lutherischer Narr" takes the Romanist side, each unsurpassed in its way. Fischart smiles with the cool air of conscious victory; while Murner, less skilful in

his weapons, rushes on with angry words and furious grimace.

In the next century all Fischart's works, except his "Bienenkorb," were forgotten, and even his name was almost unknown; but this arises from his habit of appearing pseudonymously. Thus, in his ecclesiastical satires, he calls himself Jesuwalt Pickhart; in "Gargantua," &c., Elloposkleros; and in his "Praktik" Winhold Alkofribas Wüstblutus, and so on. In the days of Gottsched and Adelung, who, as Tieck says, had interdicted all joking under a severe penalty, he was utterly despised. The latter called him a mere Hanswürst (buffoon). It was not till the end of the last century that people again began to value him as he deserved. His works, which exceed fifty in number, have become very scarce.

A few words, in conclusion, on the numerous collections of jests and anecdotes, and also the Volksbücher (Folk-books). At the beginning of the sixteenth century, a Latin work by one Bebel appeared, entitled "Facetiæ." It is a sort of Joe Miller. Most of the droll conceits in it had been long in circulation among the people, and some of them still are so. Not less popular than the above work was another, which appeared soon after, "Schimpf und Ernst" (joke and earnest). It was from the pen of Johann Pauli, a Franciscan monk, but originally a Jew, who was a disciple of Geiler's, and edited his sermons. This collection, like the other, embodies many of the elements of living popular tradition. The following specimens will give a taste of its quality. A man had three daughters, and each daughter

had a lover; but the father's means did not allow of his giving them all dowries at once, so his daughters had to decide in the following way which should marry first. They were all to wash their hands, and then dry them in the air without a towel. She whose hands were dry first, was to marry first. The youngest, however, with loud cries of "I want no husband, I want no husband," keeps fighting and struggling with her wet hands. In her pretended efforts to resist, her hands dry first, and she was married first.

The wife of a burgher had committed some crime, for which she was condemned to be exposed publicly in the pillory. Her husband, who was devotedly attached to her, could not bear the thoughts of her being subjected to this degradation; so he sought out the officer of justice, and by dint of a present prevailed on him to let him suffer the punishment instead; and he endured all the ignominy with the greatest patience. Not long after his wife quarrelled with him, and was ungrateful enough to upbraid him in public with the words, "I never have stood in the pillory like you." In this simple anecdote we have an admirable picture of low selfishness and diabolical ingratitude.

There appeared also a number of other books in the comic vein; some of them in Alsace, *e. g.*, "Die Gartengesellschaft," by Frey; "Der Wegkürzer," by Montanus; "Das Rastbüchlein," by Lindner; "Das Rollwagen-büchlein," by Wickram (some of this author's productions are the predecessors of the romance); and the "Katzipori." All of these were in vogue till late in the seventeenth century.

But the best of these jest-books is one entitled "Wendunmut," written in 1562, by Hans Kirchof, Burgrave of Spangenburg. Here there is a happy mixture of the grave with the gay. Many of the stories throw a great deal of light on the history of manners in the sixteenth century. The last of these collections, like the first, is in Latin, and is the work of Otto Melander, schoolmaster at Marburg. It is entitled "Jocoseria." The style is elegant, but the best of the stories are borrowed. What is original is full of scandal and bad wit. This collection is the best known of any.

A much longer term of existence fell to the lot of the Volksbücher properly so called, *i. e.*, books of popular stories, which nearly all, without exception, originated in the sixteenth century, and which are still in vogue. Some of the Volksbücher contain old Heroic Sagas, partly native, *e. g.*, those of the "Horned Sigfrid" and "Duke Ernest;" partly foreign, *e. g.* "Tristan," "Octavian," "Magellone," "Melusine." But what we are chiefly here concerned with are the Volksbücher of a funny character. One of the oldest of these, "Pfaffe vom Kalenberg," dates from the fourteenth century. It is the history of a parson who is up to all sorts of fun and jokes, some of them not of the most savoury kind. He resembles Pfaff Amîs, only that he is not so given to cheating, and is, moreover, a real historical character. His parish was Kalenberg, near Vienna, and he is said to have been court preacher, if not court fool, to Duke Otto, the Merry, grandson of Rudolf of Hapsburg. Many of the jokes

attributed to him, doubtless, belonged to others of his cloth, who, like him, were more fitted for dragoons than parsons.\* He had a worthy compeer in Peter Leu, a Suabian, originally a currier's boy, afterwards a priest, who played all sorts of jokes.† The work devoted to Kalenberg was by Philip Frankfurter, that to Leu by Achilles Widman. Both are in rhyme, and were often printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some of the anecdotes were still in vogue long after. For instance, one hot summer day, Kalenberg summons all his parishioners to see him fly from the top of his church steeple over the Danube. They duly respond to the summons, and wait in the heat for many hours, assuaging their thirst with the priest's bad wine, which they pay for in good coin. Here, in fact, lay the joke. At length, when he is on the point, apparently, of taking flight, he asks the peasants if they had ever seen a person fly. No, say they, such a thing was never heard of. "Quite so," said Kalenberg, "neither shall I. Go home and say you have all been here." Again, Peter Leu divides his sermon into three

\* Philip Frankfurter's "Pfaffe von Kalenberg" appeared in print 1550, 1582, 1596, and frequently till 1620. But the first editions must belong to the beginning of the sixteenth or end of the fifteenth century. It is to be found in a modernised shape in Hagen's "Narrenbuch," 1811, p. 269. He is often cited proverbially by the writers of the sixteenth century, Luther among the number.

† The history of Peter Leu, printed in 1560, and in later editions, generally appended to "Kalenberg," is to be found in a modern shape in Hagen's "Narrenbuch," p. 353. Flögel, in his "History of Court Fools," drew attention to both their works, as throwing light on the history of manners.

parts. "The first part you cannot understand, the second part I cannot, the third neither you nor I."

At the beginning of the era now treated of, appeared the famous book called "Eulenspiegel."\*

Many of Till Eulenspiegel's best jokes had been played before by Priest Amîs, Nithart, the Minnesinger, Kalenberg, and others. Again, many of them are the traditionary jokes of various trades, and can only be rightly appreciated as such. It is, in fact, these jokes, which were not the result of invention, but which really occurred to the journeyman in his trade, that give to the book its never-failing popularity and indisputable comic value. It is possible that there was some more than usually facetious travelling artizan in

\* See Görre's "Die deutschen Volksbücher," 1807, who well describes the poetic influence of these old productions of the Volksage.

The book of "Till Eulenspiegel" was edited, with notes, by Lappenberg, 1854, not to mention the many renovations of it, the best of which is that by Simrock. Lappenberg entitles it, "Dr. Thomas Murner's Eulenspiegel," but the assumption that it was written by Murner only rests on the untrustworthy notice of an anonymous pamphlet of the sixteenth century. Moreover, the style of the preface, let alone of the book itself, is not that of Murner. Besides, the text of the oldest edition, 1519, (said to have been edited by Murner,) gives evidence of having been originally composed in Platt Deutsch, *e. g.* in the Low-German expression for mother. Indeed, Lappenberg (p. 347) himself admits the probability of such a Platt Deutsch version of it of the year 1483 (compare Lessing's works, xi. 492), and, in that case, the assumption that Murner was the author at once falls to the ground. The editions of "Eulenspiegel" are very numerous. Fischart turned it into rhyme, probably in 1570. There are extant translations of it into Dutch, French, English, and Danish, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Grässe's assertion ("Lehrbuch der allg. Lit. Gesch." ii. 2, 1020), that the oldest Dutch translation dates from the year 1495, is devoid of proof. Many of the tricks played in "Eulenspiegel" are very disgusting, to the great detriment of the comic element.



the north of Germany, on whom many of the old jokes long current throughout the land were fathered, and who may, perhaps, have himself repeated them, intentionally or unintentionally. In process of time this might possibly lead to a life of him being written, in which were embodied all the various scattered stories. It may be that his name was Till, and that he was buried at Möllen, in Mecklenburg, in 1350. Indeed, not so many years ago, a lime-tree stood on his supposed grave, into which every travelling journeyman made a point of hammering a nail. He could not, however, have been called Eulenspiegel, for this word refers to a proverb of the sixteenth century: "Der Mensch erkennt seine Fehler eben so wenig wie eine Affe oder eine Eule, die in den Spiegel sehen, ihre eigene Hässlichkeit erkennen" (a man is no more aware of his own faults, than is an ape or an owl that looks into a mirror aware of its own ugliness). Besides, although the book Eulenspiegel was in print at the end of the fifteenth century, yet in South Germany the name was almost entirely unknown in the middle of the sixteenth; the name "Bochart" being used instead.\* It was only till after this time that the name "Eulenspiegel" became general, and absorbed all former fools and names of fools.

The same may be predicated of the "Schildbürger," otherwise "Lalenbuch." For a long time the sayings and doings of the burghers and magistrates of small, out-of-the-way places, their coxcombry, their pretentious-

\* See Sebastian Frank, "Göldin Arch." 1558, fol. Bl. 267a; Kirchhof, "Wendunmut," Nos. 410, 411.

ness, and stupidity, were the butt of popular ridicule. The anecdotes about these, however, were not the result of invention, but were actual facts. Many of the most important features of these are to be found in poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It was not till the end of the sixteenth century that they were collected\*, and fastened on the town of Schilda—not so exclusively, however, as the travelling jokes on Eulenspiegel, for every county of Germany can boast of its Abdera, its abode of pompous fatuity. In Bavaria there is Weilheim; in Brunswick, Scheppenstedt: Hessa has its Schwarzenborn.

Again, the legend of Dr. Faust was current from the beginning of the sixteenth century, while the well-known Volksbuch was written in the second half of the sixteenth.†

There is no doubt that there really did exist one Johann Faust, who dealt in magic, and played all sorts

\* A few features of these gentry are to be found as early as the thirteenth century, *e. g.* in Freidank's "Bescheidenheit," in Reinfrid von Braunschweig. In the sixteenth century they appear in Bebel, B. Waldis, Frischlin, &c., without being fixed on any particular town. The book "Von den Schildbürgern" (Lalenbuch) appeared first in 1598. It is modernized in Hagen's "Narrenbuch," 1811, pp. 1-214, 448-486. Compare "Leipziger Lit. Z." 1812, No. 161.

† Raumer, "Histor. Taschenbuch," 5 Jargang, p. 125. Faust was seen by the Abbot Trithem in the year 1506 at Gelnhausen; by Konrad Mutius Rufus, 1513, at Erfurt. They call him a gyrovagus, battologus, circumcellio, merus ostentator, and fatuus. The story of Faust was printed first at Frankfort, 1588; with notes, by Widman, in 1599; and with further additions by Pfizer, in 1674. Widman's version, without his own and Pfizer's notes, was published at Reutlingen, 1834. Compare Hagen, "Ueber die ältesten Darstellungen der Faust-sage," 1844; also the books of Düntzer, Reichlin-Meldegg, and Peter.

of extraordinary pranks. He lived in the first thirty years of the sixteenth century, and, according to the best accounts, was a native of South Germany—it is said of Kundlingen, in Suabia. Many of the things, however, which are attributed to him, were also ascribed to other personages. For instance, the black dog, under which the Devil is disguised, is also coupled with the name of Cornelius Agrippa, a contemporary of Faust, and also with that of Pope Sylvester II. So the Winter-garden may be traced back to Albertus Magnus. And just as “Eulenspiegel” was the embodiment of all the travelling handicraftsmen’s jokes, and the “Schildbürger” of the stupidities of municipal functionaries, so “Faust” was the hero of every thing that was marvellous and superstitious.

Another Saga, that of the “Wandering Jew” (Ewiger Jude), can be traced back far into the thirteenth century. It does not, like the preceding ones, belong to Germany exclusively, though it was in Germany that it was especially developed, becoming connected in the sixteenth century with a real personage, who made his appearance in Hamburg and other parts of North Germany.\*

This short allusion to the German Volksbücher must suffice. We will only further mention the tale of “Fortunatus,” which perhaps originated in Bretagne ;

\* Grässe, “Die Sage vom Ewigen Juden,” 1844. Matthew of Paris, the English chronicler in the first half of the thirteenth century, mentions the legend, then current, of an Armenian who professed to have seen the Jew Kartaphilus, who was afterwards baptized, and called Joseph. The story of the Wandering Jew, who appeared in Hamburg in 1547, was printed in Germany in 1602, and frequently afterwards.

may, may have possibly belonged to the ancient German mythology; also, the odd tale of "Finkenritter," which gives a capital notion of the inordinate addiction to lying of the itinerants of the sixteenth century; and whether the work of Fischart or of some older author,\* is, at all events, the precursor of "Captain Rodomond" and "Schelmufski" in the seventeenth, and of "Münchhausen" in the eighteenth century.

After all, these productions of the sixteenth century, be they never so light and fanciful, have survived the heavy compositions of the succeeding generation. While the stilted trash of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century is now obsolete, "Eulenspiegel," the "Schildbürger," and "Faust" have remained in everybody's mouth, and, trifles as they are, afford no little gratification, not the least of which, perhaps, consists in the recollection that they are the bequests of an age when Germany was still German.

From the above we have seen that in these still lingering Volksagas there lay abundance of poetical material, hidden, it is true, and overlaid by rubbish, but which it only wanted a Klinger, a Schlegel, a Tieck, and a Goethe to bring to the light of day, and elaborate into something choice and beautiful. Even now, much of this old material is still unworked. Wieland's "Ab-

\* The little work called "Finkenritter," which is still current as a Folk-book, was printed first at Strasburg between 1559 and 1570. If, as Meusebach is said to have assumed, Fischart did write it, it must have been one of his earliest works; the fable, however, was, without doubt, in existence before. As early as 1571, at a time when Fischart had scarcely come out as an author, "Finkenritter" is mentioned quite proverbially by J. Nass, in his "Von Fratrīs Joannis Nasen Esel," Bl. 54 a.

derites" shows what could be made of the Schildbürger. What a pity that his tale is laid in Greece instead of in Germany!

A few observations here, in conclusion, on the language of Luther. It is the new High German, a compound of the hard popular dialect of the South of Germany and the softer speech of the North; and it is in this style, so pithy, compact, and forcible, that the intellect of Germany still professes to write. All agree that his translation of the Bible is a re-creation of the German language; and this great result is due to the manner in which he set about the task. He devoted himself, body and soul, to his work, his whole being absorbed in the spirit of Revelation. It was with an intense horror of sin, and heartfelt experience of the comforts of the Gospel, that he translated the Bible; and therefore it is that, as that book transformed and ruled the world, so this translation of it transformed and ruled the German language.

Only one branch of prose kept aloof from that of Luther. This was that of the old mystic school, which was now on the point of dissolution. Its representatives, such as Kaspar Schwenkfeld and Sebastian Frank, declared him to be the founder of a new papacy, and continuing in their old groove of tranquil subjectiveness and dreamy contemplation, adhered tenaciously to the hereditary smoothness of the mystic style. Frank's productions are first rate in their way. His historical and theological writings, especially his paradoxes, are quite a pattern of philosophic style, soft, smooth, and pliant in the extreme. No good

account of this remarkable man has yet appeared. He was the author of the first history of the world in the German language, and also wrote a collection of proverbs, with ingenious commentaries thereon.\* Agricola of Eisleben had preceded him with a similar work ;† while, at the end of the century, Eucharius Eysring followed in the same line. These proverb-collectors of this period supply the place of the old gnomie poets, — of a Welscher Gast, a Freidank, and a Renner.

But it is time to leave this part of our subject.

\* Sebastian Frank's "Sprichwörter" appeared first at Frankfort in 1541, then at the same place in 1554, 1565, and often. In the Zurich edition of 1545 the arrangement and language are altered for the worse. Frank's historical works are, the "Zeitbuch und Geschichtsbibel," 1531, folio, (of which many editions still exist,) "Weltbuch, Spiegel und Bildniss des ganzen Erdbodens," 1534, and "Teutscher Nation Chronik," folio. The latter work is not much more than a compilation. Of his theological works, the most remarkable are his "Paradoxa," 1533, and his additions to his translation of Erasmus' "Moriae Encomium," his "Güldin Arch," and "Verbütschiertes Buch."

† Agricola's "Sprichwörter," appeared first at Magdeburg, 1528, in the Low German dialect (comp. Weigand in the Allg. Kirchenz., 1841, No. 167), then, in 1529, in High German. The later editions are much enlarged, so that the last, that of 1592, contains 749 proverbs.

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## THE NEW PERIOD.

THIS second great division of the history of German literature commences with Martin Opitz and the year 1624. Its peculiar characteristic is that it endeavours to amalgamate foreign poetic elements with those which are essentially German. Rejecting the old traditions, and deserting the path that the people had followed for eight centuries, it bids a formal adieu to the past. Of all the early living sources of poetic inspiration nothing remains. The old life of the people is as much forgotten and lost as if it had never been. A loss never to be repaired, not even by the highest excellencies at which German poetry arrived by following another path. The old edifice was broken down, but fortunately there was strength sufficient in the German intellect to erect a new one, not indeed such as the old one was, rearing itself majestically on the lofty hill in the midst of the forest, but one of a different sort, more inhabitable, more accessible, placed on the great highway of European intercourse.

But before this consummation was arrived at, a time of ignoble lethargy and disreputable bondage intervened. For a full century, from 1624 to 1720 (1730), foreign elements ruled triumphant, and German poetry lay prostrate. A turn for the better ensued from 1720 to about 1750. After this an improved state of things

succeeded, and from 1750 to 1832, we may reckon as the second classical period of German literature.

It was in 1680 that what was left of German poetry gradually died out. First one voice and then another became dumb. Instead of the *Volkslied* (popular lay), all free, fresh, and natural, we have a spiritless, artificial counterfeit, tricked out with all sorts of tasteless pedantries, which has been called *Gesellschaftslied* (society-lay) by Hoffman of Fallersleben. At last, at the close of the century, the victory of classic philology, learned theology, and jurisprudence, over everything that could be called German, was complete. An irreconcilable rupture ensued between learned and unlearned. On the one side were a set of pedants buried in their books, and having no sympathy with national life; on the other side were masses without knowledge, without aspirations. The so-called *Gelehrte* and *Gebildete* (learned and polished folks) looked with contempt on everything belonging to the people, their language, their poetry, their very faith, their ideas, their whole life. The people in turn became suspicious and indifferent to everything that appertained to their learned contemners. They could not understand the language current among their superiors; nay, the very language of the parson in the pulpit became unintelligible to them. How could it be otherwise, when the higher classes claimed as their exclusive prerogative everything belonging to the mind and the intellect? For two centuries this schism continued in full force. Even the Reformation, which had prevented the worst evil of all, the exclusion of the masses from that common

fountain of belief, the Bible, in its further development widened the existing breach, and undid much of the previous good it had done, by entering the arena of dogmatic strife. But what did the most harm of all was the influence which countries to the south and west of Germany, but France especially, began to exercise upon German intellect and German culture. German simplicity of manners, nay, the very language itself, disappeared from the court and from the castles of the nobility. The higher *littérati*, the public officials, even the richer burghers, ceased to speak their mother tongue. Nothing would do but a slavish imitation of French manners and French language. The *à-la-mode* age, as the writers of that day call it, had fairly set in. Absurd affectations of expression, perukes, etiquette, hypocrisy, ceremoniousness, and a love of the grandiose—such were the Frenchified tastes of Germany from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century. The result of this was that it became the most ridiculous, as well as the most unhappy, nation in Europe. And, as might be expected, this state of affairs was sharply impressed upon the poetry of the time. The ultimate consequence of this triumph of erudition, and of French fashions, was an extraordinary barrenness in poetical production. For a period of thirty years, from 1590 to 1620, not a poem worth mentioning appeared.

Now, had the love of classical philology prevailing in the sixteenth century moved the verse-writers of the seventeenth century to go to the fountain-head, and take for their models the great works of Greece and

Rome, the seventeenth century would not have been what it is, the most melancholy epoch in the history of German literature. But, instead of this, they only imitated imitations of the originals. The worst feature in the Latin poetry of the sixteenth century had been that it was based on the later Latin poets, and not on those of the best age; while from the Greeks it borrowed but little of its inspiration. And it was these very Latin poems of the sixteenth century, that the classical poets of the seventeenth took as their model. The trashy spick-and-span Latin and Dutch versification of a Daniel Heinsius was the much admired ideal of an Opitz, a Tscherning, and a Gryphius. It is lamentable to see how one German verse-maker in these days complimented another as a German Virgil, a very Tibullus, Horace, or Propertius; although there were not wanting instances of similar absurd flattery in the sixteenth century. From this day forward it was on the field of learning that German poetry exhibited its prowess. What a man had experienced himself, felt in his own heart, seen with his own eyes, such was not the substance of his poems; but he only described what he had learned, what he had read. Roman mythology, too, was the means now selected to give a particular colouring and brilliancy to the German muse; and the verse writers plumed themselves not a little on its introduction. If the muse was passionless, fancy lame, the verse laggard and rhymeless, a Jupiter and Juno were brought to give aid; Minerva and Apollo were also there; the modest Cynthia and Venus with Cupid formed part of

the poetical machinery. People fancied that poets could be made, like philologists, by time and practice ; that, by attention to rules, one poet might win laurels as well as another. Certain implements of trade must, of course, be at hand. Mythology, for instance ; methods of expression, borrowed from Latin and French poetry ; a stock of choice epithets, tropes, and metaphors : provided with these, one might make verses like shoes, or poems like coats. As for epics, one might, with perseverance, construct one as good as those of Homer : better too. Were not there plenty of faults in his ? Could not the learned writers of these modern days achieve something much more perfect ?

It is only on these grounds that one can at all understand the vast number of poetasters of the seventeenth century, who, without possessing any special call for the art, looked upon themselves as the upholders of the poetic genius of Germany. We alluded above to the choice epithets which now came into vogue. Now through all its vicissitudes German poetry had never lost sight of the necessity of using simple and appropriate epithets. The green grass, the green wood, the wild wood, the dark night, were hitherto considered as sufficiently poetical expressions. The German poetry of the seventeenth century looked upon all this as rude and out of date. More attractive epithets must be invented, something sharper and more telling ;\* and so an expression like "dark evening," must be discarded. "Brown evening," that was the right phrase. And

\* See Hofmannwaldau, in the preface to his book, "*Deutsche Uebersetzungen und Gedichte*," Breslau, 1679.

accordingly "brown evening" ran from mouth to mouth as something perfectly charming, a marvel of poetic invention, and throughout the seventeenth century the evening continued to be "brown." In like manner Opitz's poems are full of "salted tears," "glassy waters," "cold north-stars," "pale cares," &c. With him the world is no longer "world," but "a round," "a great round," "a beautiful round," "a desert round." Hand is no longer "hand," but "fist;" the sea "blue salt." And yet Opitz is the most moderate of them all. Lohenstein and his school ran quite epithet-mad. Indeed he has become a proverb of tumidity and bombast. Sound, not sense, was the motto of poetry-writers. We may quote the well-known lines of Opitz.

"Die Lerche schreit auch: Dir, Dir, lieben Gott allein  
Singt alle Welt; Dir, Dir, Dir, will ich dankbar sein."

"The lark cries too: Thee, Thee, good God alone  
Sings all the world; to Thee, Thee, Thee, will I be grateful."

The chief merit of Opitz consists in his introduction of a new metrical system into Germany. This refers principally to narrative and not to lyric poetry. Everybody felt that an improvement was necessary, but nothing was done till he wrote a small volume in 1624, "Die deutsche Poeterei," on the appearance of which a perfect revolution took place. The doctrine herein propounded is, that in German verse, arsis and thesis must as regularly alternate as in antique trochaic and iambic verse long and short syllables alternate with each other. As for dactyls, Opitz discarded



them as unfitted for German poetry. Notwithstanding which, these feet, as well as amphibrachs, anapæsts, cretics, were before long introduced, with all the different kinds of ancient metre.

With regard to the change inaugurated by Opitz, there is no doubt that the short pairs of rhymes (the form of the old poetic narrative) was now become utterly obsolete. In fact, it would only suit a pliant and musical tongue, such as was the Middle High-German. In New High-German it looked hard and inflexible. The tongue had altered, and the verse must necessarily be altered also, to bring the one into harmony with the other. The old short rhyme pairs were already, in the seventeenth century, pronounced nothing but doggerels. Unfortunately, however, the substitute hit upon by Opitz was, if possible, a change for the worse. This was the Alexandrine, borrowed from the French, and which the Germans praised to the skies as the *ne plus ultra* of German versification. This delusion prevailed down to the time of Lessing; and very lately Rückert and Freiligrath have both put forward the pretensions of the "Wüsten-Ross von Alexandria" (the desert-steed of Alexandria). Another change made by Opitz was putting the epithet between the article and substantive. Instead of "das Mündlein rot, die Händlein weiss," he would write, "das rote Mündlein," &c.

We must not omit to mention here, as a remarkable feature of those times, the foundation of societies professedly for the improvement of the German language and poetry. But they were mere silly imitations of

similar societies in Italy, *e. g.*, the "Arcadians" at Rome, the "Sleepers," at Genoa, and the "Della Crusca," at Florence, which was perhaps the most absurd of all: with many others, all of them scenes of nonsense and pompous buffoonery. On the 24th of August, 1617, the "Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft" ("Fruit-bearing Society") was founded at Weimar, in the presence of three Dukes of Saxony and a host of other princes and nobles.\* This society was in every respect worthy of its illustrious prototypes. Each member had as his symbol some plant or product of a plant, *e. g.*, one had a roll of white bread, with the device, "Nothing better." It is perhaps needless to observe, that the "fruit" produced by this august society was *nil*. Similar societies were founded at Strasburg and in Lower Saxony; an "Order of the swan" in Holstein; at Nuremberg, "The crowned order of flowers," which still exists. Such were the productions of those unfortunate times;—form without substance—husk without kernel—socially, politically, and poetically. The only sounds of true poetry at all audible are the Evangelical Church Lays of Gerhard, and a few others. But we must enter into some particulars.

\* See Hille, "Der Teutsche Palmenbaum," 1647, and Ludwig, Prince of Anhalt, "Der Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft Namen," &c., Frankfurt, 1648. From these two works arose the chief work on the Society, viz. George Neumark's (under his social name, "der Sprossende," "the Sprouter,") "Der neu-sprossende deutsche Palm-baum," &c., Nuremberg, 1673. The most recent account of the Society is Barthold's "Geschichte d. F. Gesell.," 1848.

## SCHOOLS.

It will be most convenient to divide the verse writers into schools. Such were the first Silesian School, with Opitz at its head. The school of Königsberg; that of Nuremberg;\* Rist's School, in Holstein;† and that of Philip von Zesen. In the last third of the century we have the second Silesian School, descended from Opitz; and the poetry of common-place, under the patronage of Christian Weise. In this description the prose writings will be included, save and except the Romance.

As far back as the year 1620, Silesia, which was less disturbed than the rest of Germany by the troubles of the times, exhibited not a few traces of poetical talent. This was, however, all in the classical line, which had flourished there since the days of Trotzendorf.

Popular poetry was not at home in that region. Here, then, in this classic soil, it was that "purity of German language, verse and rhyme," grew under the auspices of Martin Opitz. Opitz had nothing of the inventive genius about him. He was a man of ordinary talent, who had a knack of taking the right cue and sailing with the popular gale, whichever way it blew. Weak, good-tempered, and vain, in a strong age he

\* Johann Herdegen (Amarantes), "Historische Nachricht von des Hirten- und Blumen-Ordens," &c., Nuremberg, 1744.

† One of them was Andreas Gödeke, who wrote "Zimbrische Kriegs und Siegeslieder," Hamburg, 1667. For an account of the Order of the Swan, see Konrad von Hövelen, "Deutscher Zimber-Swan," Lubeck, 1666-67; Otto Schulz, "Die deutschen Sprachgesellschaften des 17 Jahrhunderts," Berlin, 1824.

would have been despised ; but in times of weakness he was the very man to thrive. Gervinus and Hoffmann von Fallersleben have been very severe upon him in their histories of German literature.\* The secret of his popularity was, that he was all things to all men. At one and the same time he was translating for the Burgrave of Dohna, a Roman Catholic work, "Becanus," the object of which was to make papists of the people of Silesia; and Grotius' work "De Veritate," for the town-council of Breslau, the bitter opponents of the Burgrave. Opitz made friends of everybody : of the Dukes of Silesia, the Danish princes, the Emperor Ferdinand II., the King of Poland, and later of Oxenstiern. He was ready to toady—not the greatest of the dead, but the very smallest of the living. This will partly explain why the author of such middling poems,—which, compared with many of the sixteenth century, dwindle into insignificance — was elevated into a "Pindar, a Homer, and a Maro," by his contemporaries. What really did in part entitle him to his celebrity was, not the substance, but the masterly *form* of his compositions. He it was who first restored German poetry to its natural flow, made it run smoothly, and in unison with the state of the language, as well as lightly and harmoniously, as of yore. But in saying that he is a master of form, pretty nearly all has been said in his favour that he deserves. On the other hand, his demerits are the demerits common to all the writers of his time. He is all fiction

\* Gervinus, "Geschichte der poet. Nationalliteratur," iii. 213; Hoffmann, "Politische Gedichte," &c., 1843, p. 217.

from beginning to end, and he it is that gives the tone to all the poetry of Germany till the days of Lessing and Klopstock. The feelings and sentiments are factitious, only exist upon paper, not in the heart of the poet. The disguise is transparent. It is all mere fine phrases, which too frequently sink into the weak, the trivial, and the mean. We have the screwed-up fancies of a pedant, who, when he emerges from the four walls of his study, is quite beside himself at the sight of a calf feeding on the meadow. We have the compliments of the smooth courtier, the set speeches of a half Christian—mere lip-talk without heart. He is the great authority in all sorts of occasional pieces, whether of a congratulatory or condoling character, which abounded in the seventeenth century to a sickening degree. His “*Trostgedichte*,” “*consolatory poems*,” written during the reverses of war, are the oldest and far the best of his verse compositions. They did not come to light, it is true, till 1633, *i. e.* about twelve years after they were written. But the reason is, that they were of a strong Protestant tinge, and the author wished to earn his laurels first from the Emperor Ferdinand II. and Count Dohna. They are often very learned, it is true, and frequently look like translations from the Latin; but of all his descriptive pieces, they only have any truth in them. Next after these we may place several of his lyric pieces. His “*Zlatna*,” on tranquillity of mind, is much inferior; as likewise his “*Vielguet*,” on true happiness; while his “*Vesuvius*” is the most tedious descriptive poem imaginable. His “*Daphne*,” a pastoral, is a pitiful affair; while his

many Biblical imitations are dry and meagre. The largest space in his works is occupied by his translations, *e. g.* of the "Antigone" of Sophocles, Seneca's "Trojan Women," and from the French and Dutch. His translations are open to less animadversion than his other pieces. The "Antigone" is still quite readable. His "Annolied" is mentioned elsewhere.\*

Passing over Buchner and a host of others, we next come to Paul Flemming, who, though no Silesian, wrote more than anybody in the spirit and form of Opitz. A hymn of his, "In allen meinen Thaten lass ich den Höchsten raten," is still sung in the churches of Germany. But he is most known as a lyrist,—an inferior one, it is true,—but yet infinitely truer than Opitz and his numerous crew. His song, "Wie er wolle geküsset sein," is rather celebrated, although Gervinus has shown that another ode of his, on the marriage of one Schnörkel, (the first in the third book

\* Martin Opitz was born 23d December. 1597, at Bunzlau, and wrote verses in 1619, while still a student at Heidelberg. Afterwards he joined with D. Heinsius at Leyden. From 1622–1624 he was teacher of philosophy at Weissenburg, in Transylvania, and it is to his residence there that we owe his poem of "Zlatna." From 1626 he was secretary to the Burgrave of Dohna, and ennobled by the Emperor in 1629, under the title of "Opitz von Boberfeld." In 1636 he was made secretary and historiograph of the kingdom of Poland, and died of the plague at Danzig, 20th August, 1639. The first edition of his poems appeared at Strasburg in 1624, edited by Zinkgraf. The first edition, superintended by himself, at Breslau, 1625, and two others, Breslau, 1629 and 1637–38. An important edition is that which appeared after his death, Danzig, 1641. The most complete of the late editions is Breslau, 1690, but very incorrect. The first part of an edition by Bodmer and Breitinger appeared in 1745. Another edition is that of Triller, Frankfort, 1746. A complete critical edition is still wanting.



of his odes,) is of much higher merit. One thing at least can be said in his praise, viz., that there is more poetry and life, and less of the mechanical, in his occasional pieces than in those of Opitz and most of his followers. His poems, for instance, on Germany, and on his step-mother, are really good. His sonnet to himself, beginning "Sei dennoch unverzagt gib dennoch unverloren," is excellent; while his own epitaph, written three days before his death, in the thirty-first year of his age at Hamburg, half a year after the death of Opitz, betrays somewhat of the common vanity of the time, but evinces withal no little poetical power.\*

Andreas Gryphius is the third leader of this school, which died out with him in 1664. As a lyrist he is little behind Flemming. Instead of depicting the cheerful side of life, like Flemming, he selects the earnest side of it. This feature of his composition is exemplified in the lay "Die Herrlichkeit der Erden muss Staub und Asche werden," which is still sung in German churches. His "Kirchhof-Gedanken," ("Church-yard Thoughts,") a poem in fifty strophes, is also celebrated. The tendency observable in it to exaggerated description, as well as the indulgence in unnatural exclamations, and artificial and bombastic expressions, are still more glaring in his tragedies. He has been called the Father of German dramatic poetry. In some respects this may be true. He determined the direction of

\* Flemming was born 5th October, 1609, at Hartenstein, in the Vogtland, and went as physician with the embassy of the Duke of Gottorp to Persia in 1634, returning in 1639; he died at Hamburg, 7th April, 1640. His poems were first published at Jena, 1642; the best known is the enlarged edition of Merseburg, 1685.

German tragedy towards foreign and modern subjects, and ordered the description according to the rules of art. He was the first to introduce order and connexion of events, and gave an individuality to the different characters. But it would be an error to say that Gryphius took the right and true path, or that he was the first to awaken the dramatic consciousness of the nation.

His tragedies are for the most part on very out-of-the-way subjects, *e. g.*, "Leo the Armenian," the Byzantine Emperor who was murdered at the Christmas festival in the year 820. This is one of his best. It was written in 1646, and re-modelled 1661. Another is styled "Papinianus," who was executed by Caracalla. Both these pieces are deficient in incident, but rich in sententious passages and rhetorical exclamations. "Karl Stuart," on the trial and death of Charles I., is more like a rhetorical exercise than anything else. Little can be said in praise of "Katharina von Georgien," the subject of which is taken from Chardin's "Voyages en Perse." "Cardenio und Celinde" is borrowed from an Italian novel. It is one of his weakest pieces. All these plays are divided into scenes, just as at present, besides which they are provided with a chorus. In "Karl Stuart" the chorus is represented by the ghosts of murdered English kings. In "Katharina," in addition to the ghosts of murdered people, we have the Virtues, Death, and Love. In "Leo" the chorus consists of priests and maidens. Ghosts, however, are introduced, who do not belong to the chorus. Thus, in "Leo," we have the ghost of the Patriarch of Jeru-

salem; and, in "Katharina," Eternity is summoned from Heaven to speak the prologue. In comedy, Gryphius achieved much better things. His two original prose comedies, "Peter Squenz" and "Horribilicribrifax," are excellent in their way. They are, both of them, a great advance upon the old Shrove-tide farces. The first of these pieces is nearly allied with the well-known episode in Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream." Early in the seventeenth century this interlude was introduced by Daniel Schwenter on the German stage, in the shape given it by the Englishman Cox. From this, as Gryphius himself states, he caught the idea, but the details are his own. A set of bungling would-be comedians have the audacity to try their powers in learned mythical subjects. Here, as in Shakespeare, Pyramus and Thisbe are the objects of their histrionic ambition. It is a case of comedy within comedy, where the actors flounder along into all sorts of absurdities, to the great diversion of the Royal audience. These potentates, on the conclusion of the divertissement, decline to give a farthing for the play itself, but reward the players with fifteen guldens for every blunder they have made.

In "Horribilicribrifax" the action is less connected, but the two retired officers, Captain Horribilicribrifax and Captain Diridaradatundarides, admirably represent the braggadocio partizans of the Thirty Years' War. One of these is for ever interlarding his conversation with Italian, the other with French. Sempronius, the retired schoolmaster, is an inimitable caricature of the preposterous erudition of those days, which was con-

tinually expressing itself in phrases from Virgil and Cicero, never forgetting to add, inquit Cicero, inquit Virgilius. Coarse passages are not wanting in these pieces, but at all events Gryphius divests his comedies of the stiffness and uniformity of the Silesian school, and assays to do, what that school did not, describe real life.\*

He also tried his skill in epigram, at that time called Beischriften, but he was far surpassed by Friedrich von Logau, a Silesian nobleman, who in 1638 issued a collection of 200 epigrams, and in 1654 another of 3,553. In description and flow of language Logau is not a whit inferior to the heads of the school, while in truth of feeling, earnestness of purpose, and in terseness of expression, he excels them all, Opitz included. The best half of these epigrams are so good that Germany may well be proud of them. Indeed, they are quite on a par with anything of the kind by Wernicke, Kästner, and Göckingk, and superior to the epigrams of Haug. One of their best features is that they are not exclusively devoted to literary topics, or private follies, but to matters of general interest, and to the public affairs of the time. Would it, then, be believed that fifty years after his death, Logau's name was for-

\* Andreas Gryphius was born 11th October, 1616, at Grossglogau. After nearly ten years spent in travel, he was made Syndicus of the Principality of Glogau in 1647, and died 16th July, 1664. His "Leo der Armenier" appeared in 1639, 1650, 1663; the "Horribilicribrifax," 1661; the "Epigrams," 1663. These editions have become rare. The first collective edition of his works appeared, under his own superintendence, 1657; a second, containing his poems written after that date, was published by his son, Christian Gryphius, 1698; wanting, however, "Das Verliebte Gespenst." It was re-edited by Palm, Breslau, 1855, with the "Geliebte Dornrose," a piece in the Silesian dialect.

gotten?—a striking contrast to the success of Opitz. But there was a good reason for it. He despised all the dedicational and laudatory trash of the day, and would not even affix his name to his epigrams, which professed to be the work of Salomo von Golau. His works are, of course, not to be found in the catalogue of the “Fruit-bearing Society,” of which he was a member; and the Polyhistor, Morhof, did not know his real appellation. An anonymous selection appeared in 1702, which omits the best of his epigrams, and spoils many of the rest. It was reserved for Lessing and Rammler to point out his merits. Even their edition, containing about one-third of his pieces, fails to give a correct idea of him as a describer of contemporary manners. This can only be obtained in the complete edition of his original works.\*

Joachim Rachel represents poetic satire in this school. He was a native of North Germany, and died at Sleswig in 1669. His six or (if the last two are genuine) eight satires, are too learned for satire proper. His descriptions of the degenerate state of youthful education, as also that of the ever-ready poets of the day, are good, although the former is an imitation of Juvenal, and contains much that is quite un-German. Prose satire is represented by Hans Michael Moscherosch, of Alsace.† His “Gesichte

\* Friederich von Logau was born at Nimptsch, in Silesia, 1604; was in the service of the Duke of Liegnitz, and died 1655. The complete edition of his epigrams is entitled “Salomons von Golau deutscher Sinn-Getichte Drey Tausend.”

† Born at Wilstädt, in the county of Hanau-Lichtenberg, in Alsace, 7th March, 1600 (old style); was in the service of Counts Leiningen, the

Philanders von Sittenwald" was very popular at one time, and not unworthily so. His chief value lies in the sketches of contemporary manners. But the satire disappears almost entirely in a cloud of allegory. On the whole, this piece leaves anything rather than a comic or satirical impression. While the writer professes to satirize pedantry and affectation of the foreign, he falls into the very fault itself. The work is crammed with Latin verses, and French, Italian, and Latin phrases. While it assails the unnatural stiffness and silly knowingness of the day, it is itself a specimen of the absurdities it assails. With the works of the older satirists, Murner and Fischart, it had nothing in common. It is thoroughly modern, and a product of the modern learning. It is true that the author expressly states that it is his object to pourtray *à-la-mode* virtues in *à-la-mode* colouring; but it seems to come so natural to him that nobody can believe that his object is ridicule. Still, the work is an important contribution to the social history of those days. Indeed, in one part, "Soldatenleben," there are more vivid glimpses at the Thirty Years' War than can be found anywhere else.

Counts Kriechingen, the Dukes of Croy, the King of Sweden, and, after 1656, was privy-councillor at Hanau. He died at Worms, 4th April, 1669. The first edition of his works appeared in 1640, containing seven *Gesichte*; the second in 1642-1643, with four more, or eleven in all. In the same year, or 1644, appeared "Pflaster wider das Podagram," and "Soldatenleben," both separately. The edition of 1646 or 1647 contains all thirteen *Gesichte*. In the fourth edition, of 1650, a new piece, "Reformation," is added. These fourteen appeared, with additions, in 1665, and again in 1677. In 1645 eleven spurious *Gesichte* appeared, along with the genuine ones, by an unknown author, at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. In 1830 the genuine *Gesichte*, together with a biography of Moscherosch, were published by Dittmar.



Like most of the works of the school, it is not original, being an imitation of Quevedo's "Sueños." Still, there is no little originality about it in reference to Germany. He found many imitators, but none are worthy of record.

Lastly, we have the collectors of anecdotes, who took the place of the earlier proverb collectors, as these, in their turn, had succeeded the older gnomie poets. Julius Wilhelm Zinkgraf, born in the Palatinate, but resident in Alsace, and the friend of Opitz, whose works he edited, stands first here. He collected "Apophthegmata," or clever sayings of distinguished Germans, old and modern. It begins with sayings of emperors, and ends with sayings of fools, and is so well done, that it is well worth reading. Subsequently, it was published, with additions, by Weidner; but the additions are much inferior to the original. A tolerable selection from it was published several years ago by Guttenstein.

The Königsberg group or School is represented by Robert Roberthin, Heinrich Albert, and Simon Dach. They chiefly wrote lyrics, and their best productions are fraught with more life and naturalness than anything of the Silesian School. There is an excellent church-hymn by Albert, "Einen guten Kampf hab' ich in der Welt gekämpft." Dach's "Annchen von Tharau" is sung at the present day.\*

\* Robert Roberthin, who called himself Berintho, lived till 1648, as Brandenburg councillor at Königsberg. Albert was organist at Königsberg till 1668, and published these poems, with some others, and with musical notes, 1638-1650. Dach was, till 1659, professor of poetry at Königsberg. The complete edition of his works appeared 1696.

A striking contrast to this natural poetry is afforded by the productions of the society called Pegnitzschäfer at Nuremberg. Artificial and strained to excess, their very essence seems to depend upon dactyls and anapæsts cunningly arranged. Sugared, effeminate, and unreal, they suit the age exactly. Not only the seventeenth century teemed with these Idyllic Daphnes and Daphnises; but even in the eighteenth there was no lack of this Arcadian trumpery. Gessner closed the series. Dramas too, with abundance of singing, but very little sense, poured forth in Nuremberg. The Coryphæi of this school were George Philip Harsdörfer and Johann Klei. The latter had a great turn for writing spiritual "Singspiele" (melodrames), *e. g.* "Herod the Child-murderer," "The Fight between the Angel and the Dragon." Here is a specimen of his quavering, jingling, whirligig versicles: —

"Wir holen Violen in blumichten Auen, Narzissen entspiessen  
von perlenen Thauen,  
Die besten der Westen nun blumen ausstreuen, die Felder, die  
Wälder ihr Laubwerk erneuen,  
Die Blätter vom Wetter sehr lieblichen spielen, es nisten und  
pisten die Vögel im Kühlen."

Härtzdörfer gained great celebrity by his "Frauenzimmer-Gesprächspiele," a sort of ladies' encyclopædia; and still more by his recipe for writing poetry, "Der Poetische Trichter," dedicated to Moscherosch.\*

Another group of poetasters, anxious to maintain "the ornateness, and sweetness, and purity of the primæval

\* See Julius Tittmann, "Die Nürnberger Dichterschule, Harsdorfer, Klay," Birken, 1847.

heroic tongue of Germany," clustered round Johann Rist, pastor at Wedel, in Holstein. In constructing lyrics he was very expert; but with him poetry was a mechanical and superficial affair. It is only in religious poetry that he displays any truth or originality. Of Jacob Schwieger, alias Philidor der Dorferer's, numerous lyric compositions, "Des Flüchtigen flüchtige Feldrosen" and "Die Geharnischte Venus," are the only ones that rise above the common-place.

He also wrote tragedies, comedies, and "Mischspiele" (mixed pieces), *e. g.* "Der Vermeinte Prinz," from the Italian of Pallavicini; "Ernelinde," from the English; also an original drama "Die Wittekinder." Here we have introduced Hans Wurst (the German Jack-pudding), with his dull, coarse buffoonery, the almost invariable adjunct of all German plays, till he was formally and solemnly banished by Gottsched.

One more group of the middle of the seventeenth century remains to be mentioned; Philip von Zesen's "Rosengesellschaft," (Society of Roses). Like the Nuremberg Society, they thought of nothing but jingle and ornateness; and even went beyond them in artificiality. They had a particular passion for madrigals (called by Zesen "Shattenliedlein"), and French and Italian rondeaux. These, Zesen put into dactylic metre, which in his opinion bore the palm over every other kind of verse. In his excessive anxiety to purify the language he indulged in manifest absurdities. Nature he called "producing-mother;" crown prince, "kingly prince;" theatre, "show-castle;" obelisk, "sun-point;," a verse was "Dichtling" (diminutive, from dichten, to

write poetry). Venus was "Lustinne" (feminine of Lust, *i. e.* pleasure). Aphrodite, "Schauminne" (her foaminess). Juno, "her heavenliness;" a mask, "a mumming face;" a window was "daylighter," and so on.\* The marvellous effect which such words would produce is evident. Zesen was a most prolific versifier. In the year 1637, when he was eighteen, he began his career, and wrote away till he was seventy. Purist in language as he was, he is called by Calov, the theologian, "*Corrumpuntius patriæ linguæ.*" Rachel calls him, ironically, "The Poet;" and "Zesianer" was for a long time a term of ridicule. Still he had many defenders and many imitators; and his adherents were extant even in Gottsched's time.†

We shall now briefly allude to some poetical compositions which, though contemporary with the first Silesian School, were independent of it.

The evangelical church lay must come first. In those days of pedantry and artificiality, it alone still preserved a tone of genuine truth; it alone was popular

\* A catalogue of these wonderful expressions was appended by Zesen to the "*Adriatische Rosemunda*," 366.

† Zesen was born in Priorau, near Dessau, 1619, and, after living in a variety of places, among others at Amsterdam, for a long time, died at Hamburg, 1689. His earliest works are, "*Adriatische Rosemund*," 1645, and the translations from the French, "*Ibrahim und Isabella*," 1645, "*Sophonisbe*," 1646. His latest written works are the Biblical Romances, "*Assenat*," 1670, "*Moses and Simson*," 1679. A collection of his lyrics appeared 1670, entitled "*Dichterisches Rosen- und Lilienthal*." Zesen was most celebrated for his introduction to German poetry, which appeared in numerous editions after 1640, under the title of "*Hochdeutscher Helikon*."

in the highest sense. Powerful and active must have been that faith which could extract from writers like Gryphius and Flemming—sunk as they were in allegorical fancies and starched unrealities—such genuine effusions of Christian faith as “In allen meinen Thaten,” and “Die Herrlichkeit der Erden.”

In the main, the character of the evangelical church hymn in this period is the same as we have seen it was in the sixteenth century. It is an exponent of one's own immediate personal feelings and experience; not the result of poetic fancy and divination. It comes from the heart and goes to the heart. It addresses itself to the masses, to every rank and age; it gives utterance to the people's joys and sorrows; it belongs to the church and to all. But it differs from the elder evangelical church hymn in this, that whereas in the latter few allusions are made to especial circumstances of society, and the influence exercised thereon by the evangelical faith, the new church hymn lays the greatest stress on the position of Germany as affected by the evangelical faith, with the troubles and disorders of the thirty years' war. It abounds with funeral songs, songs of the Cross and of comfort, and family songs for morning and evening. Most of these hymns are in the old popular short pair of rhymes, which had been abandoned by the secular poets; in the ancient and now despised Hildebrandston, together with the tripartite strophe system. The method of expression, too, is simple; there are no tropes and metaphors, no scene-painting, abstractions, or reflexions. Lastly, the hymns of the seventeenth century are

smooth and flowing, as compared with the rugged power and elevation of those of the sixteenth.

Of course, these observations principally refer to the best and acknowledged hymns of the evangelical church; indeed, taken as a whole, they are only applicable to one poet, Paul Gerhard. His "Ein Lämmlein geht und trägt die Schuld;" "Ich singe dir mit Herz und Mund;" "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden;" "Ich bin ein Gast auf Erden;" "Nun ruhen alle Wälder;" "Befiehl du deine Wege," are among the choicest specimens of the German lyric muse. Of Gerhard's one hundred and twenty songs, some are not church but spiritual songs, *e. g.*, "Geduld ist euch von nöten;" "Nicht so traurig, nicht so sehr;" all are written in the simple child-like old tone, coming from the deepest and most sacred recesses of the heart. Next in merit are the hymns of the Electress of Brandenburg, "Jesus meine Zuversicht," and "Ich will von meiner Missethat zum Herren mich bekehren." Then we may mention Rinkart's "Nun danket alle Gott;" Neumark's "Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten;" Rodigast's "Was Gott thut das ist wohlgethan;" Albinus' "Alle Menschen müssen sterben."

In Rist's hymns there is more life and solemnity than even in Gerhard's. At times he approaches the sublime, *e. g.* "Auf, auf, ihr Reichsgenossen, der König kommt heran;" "O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort;" "O Schwert das durch die Seele bohrt;" "O Anfang sonder Ende." Like the rest of his school, however, he is inclined to painting details, *e. g.*, in the hymn "O Ewigkeit."



Johann Heermann, of Köben, in Silesia, stands midway between the old and new period of Church Hymns. His pieces exhibit features belonging to both. Some of them are written in the Sapphic metre which now came into fashion; *e. g.*, "Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen?" He also uses the Alexandrine; *e. g.*, in "O Gott, du frommer Gott!" which Rinckart afterwards availed himself of in "Nun danket alle Gott." At a later period we meet with the hexameter, which is quite incompatible with this species of composition; *e. g.*, in Neander's "Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren." The writer, too, becomes more subjective in tone; describes his own individual feelings rather than those of the crowd; and indulges more in Christian phantasy than Christian experience. The jingle of fine words and descriptions in glaring colours crept into the Church hymn after the time of Gerhard; so that a confusion arose which even continues to the present day between the genuine Church hymn and the spiritual song. With the seventeenth century the real Church hymn disappeared, and in its place we have only (*geistliche*) spiritual lays, songs of contemplation, thought, and description, made to be read, not sung; till at last the noble old hymn died out with Gellert, and was superseded by unevangelical, not to say unchristian, rhymes.

Of writers belonging to no particular school the following may be mentioned. Friedrich von Spee, a Jesuit monk, who began to write about 1620, although his poems were not published till fourteen years after his death. The tone of his pieces reminds us of the Monk

of Salzburg and Heinrich von Laufenberg; while they also bear many points of resemblance to the Evangelical Hymn. The name he gave them was "Trutz-Nachtigall," meaning that he would sing in spite of the nightingale. The most characteristic feature of these poems is a child-like, heartfelt feeling for nature, joined with an ardent love of the Saviour. In the first feature, as well as in his tendency to playfulness, he resembles the old Minnesingers; in the second, the Evangelical Lay writers. Never esteemed by his own church, and unnoticed by the Protestants, he was first taken up by the Romantic School. Spee overflowed with Christian love in its fullest sense; it gushes forth in his poems, about which there is a reality not to be found in the artificial productions of the Silesian School. He was one of the first to set his face against the trials for witchcraft, and wrote a book on the subject. His Christian feeling is evidenced by the answer he gave to Philip von Schönborn, afterwards Elector of Mayence, when he asked him how, at the age of forty, his hair had come to be icy-grey. "My hair has grown grey with grief to think that of all the witches I have had to attend to the scaffold, I could not find one that was not innocent." \*

\* Friedrich von Spee was born at Kaiserswert, in 1591; entered the Society of Jesus at Cologne, 1610; lived 1624-1626, at Paderborn; 1627-1629, at Würzburg; 1630-31, at Falkenhagen. While here he published his "Cautio Criminalis." He died at Treves, August 7, 1635, of over-exertion in attending the wounded soldiers at the storming of that city by the Spaniards, May 6, 1635. The "Trutz-Nachtigall" first appeared at Cologne, 1649, 12mo. Verses of his are also to be

George Rudolf Weckherlin was, so to say, the prototype of Opitz; for he wrote learned poetry and employed the new measurement in verse before Opitz. In style and language he is harder than his successor. Living for the most part in London, he did not exercise the influence which he might have done on his contemporaries. "Wückerlin sings as good as he can," was the compassionate remark of Zesen\* respecting him.

Johann Scheffler, of Silesia, is better known by the name he assumed of Angelus Silesius. At a later period of his life he turned Roman Catholic. But before this he wrote some hymns which are still used by the Evangelical Church. For heartfelt fervour, they are unsurpassed in the language. His "Cherubinischer Wandersmann" contains a quantity of apophthegms about the world and art, diametrically opposed to the sententious wisdom and pretence of the Silesian School. Thus, in the sentence headed "Ohne Warum," *i. e.*, "Without a wherefore," he says, "The rose is without a wherefore. It blooms because it does bloom; it thinks not of itself, does not ask whether people see it." These proverbs are imbued with a high spirit of

found in the "Güldene Tugendbuch," 1649. The former work, together with these verses, was edited by Clemens Brentano, 1817, but with the orthography altered. The "Trutz-Nachtigall" was also published in 1641, by Hüppe and Junkmaun.

\* "Rosemunde," the poem from whence this line is taken, contains a long and laudatory catalogue of the then living poets and poetesses. Of Buchner, he writes, "Der grosse Buchner,—dehm sich kein Zizero, noch Maro gleichen kan."

poetry, but at times are disfigured by the Pantheistic notions which Scheffler held; *e. g.*

“God lives not without me:

I know that without me God can't exist a second.

Annihilate me, and he gives up the ghost.”

Anyhow, Angelus Silesius is out and out one of the most distinguished poetical personages to be found in Germany for two whole centuries.\*

Two satire-writers remain to be mentioned, whose productions are conceived more in the popular style, and remind us of the satire of the sixteenth century. The one is Wilhelm Laurenberg, of Rostock, the last German poet who wrote anything worth mentioning in Low-German (Platt-deutsch). His “Veer olde berömede Schertzgedichte” are, it is true, written in the Alexandrine, then in fashion; but the matter is quite of a popular nature, and in the true comic vein. The subjects of his ridicule are the verse-writing for pay, and the Frenchified fashions in dress and domestic life. The best idea of his merits is obtained by comparing him with his contemporary Rachel, who handled the same topics after the manner of Opitz. The other is Johann Balthaser Schuppius, of Giessen, who was Professor of History and Eloquence at Marburg from 1635 to 1646. Subsequently he was Court-preacher at Braubach, and in this capacity preached the sermon on

\* Scheffler was born at Breslau, 1624, and died there, 1677. Originally a physician, and attached as such to the Court of Würtemberg, on becoming a pervert to Popery, he took orders, and was assessor to the Bishop of Breslau. His religious poems (also entitled “Heilige Seelenlust”) appeared in the same year, as “Cherubinischer Wandersmann,” 1657.

the conclusion of the peace of Westphalia, at Münster. After this he was head of the clergy at Hamburg, where he died 1661, aged 51. Full of life and energy, he was a declared foe of the Opitz school, and of the useless pedantry of the times. Instinct with wit, humour, and earnestness—abounding with felicitous allusions to the topics of the day, and couched in a lively natural style, his writings contrast forcibly with the starched and stilted prose then so much in vogue. Perhaps they are the very best of the seventeenth century. His sermons, too, unlike those of his colleagues, are in the popular tone, and, though at times coarse, very impressive, and occasionally touching. One of these, on the New Year—due allowance being made for the congratulatory parts, which were in accordance with the then fashion—is quite a model of popular eloquence. It was these very discourses which inflamed the wrath of the Hamburg clergy. The dissensions which resulted in consequence we have to thank for the majority of his satirical and humorous pieces. In modern times he had become totally forgotten, until he was rescued from oblivion by Wachler.\*

Having thus briefly described the opponents of the Opitz school, we shall proceed to investigate its further development and fortunes.

That Opitz tried to regulate the metre, and bring it

\* See Wachler, on Schuppius, in his "Vorlesungen," &c. 1818-1819, ii. 64, and in Ebert's "Ueberlieferungen," 1826, I. 2, p. 140. Most of his chief writings in the German language (all short treatises) were written in his later years. 1656-1660. He was born at Giessen, 1610; died at Hamburg, October 26, 1661.

into unison with the state of the language, has been already stated. But, on the other hand, the propensity of his adherents for external ornamentation, for quaint and select epithets, for jingling sounds, for word-painting, and the like—although he himself may have kept within modest bounds—soon passed all limits. The declamation and rhetoric of the older school now swelled into bombast and false pathos. The colouring ran mad; the lofty tones rose into a scream. A monstrosity was the result, which bore within itself the germ of its own dissolution. Such was the fate of the second Silesian School—so called because its chiefs, Christian Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau and Daniel Caspar von Lohenstein, were, like their predecessors of forty years before, natives of Silesia.

Another collateral cause of decay, often before alluded to, was the prevalent idea inculcated by countless manuals, that poetry was not an innate gift, but an art easily attained by practice—an article of luxury, that every one might acquire, and must acquire, if he wished to be in the mode, by going to school for it. According to this notion, poetry would become a mere mechanical operation; and such was the creed of Christian Weise, (rector of the school at Weissenfels, and then at Zittau,) with his train of wishy-washy verse-writers.

Miserable as their compositions were, they, nevertheless, did one good: dethroned the bombast of the second Silesian School. Gottsched joined them, and this led to the dispute between him and the Swiss, which prepared the way for the second classical period of German Literature.



Christian Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau\*, the elder representative of the second Silesian School, was, in his youth, personally acquainted with Opitz. From him, in a great measure, he took his poetic inspiration. But he was, as he himself states, influenced most by the immoral effusions of the French, and by the poetry of Guarini and Marino, whose honeyed, bombastic, and impure verse, often merely calculated to tickle the ear, was just the stimulant required by the enervated scribblers of the day. From this source it was that Hofmannswaldau derived his "sharpened" epithets, as he calls them; his multiplication of strong phrases; his nauseously sweet images; his forced descriptions, sublime and ridiculous in a breath, and his inconceivable indecency; defects, however, in which he was imitated, if not exceeded, by Lohenstein and others. Besides his separate lyric pieces, his most characteristic work is his "Heldenbriefe," or amatory epistles, after the manner of Ovid, exchanged between a number of distinguished lovers, *e. g.* Charles the Fifth and Barbara von Blomberg; Albert III. of Bavaria and Agnes Bernauerin; Duke Henry of Brunswick and Eva von Trott; Abelard and Heloise.

Charles the Fifth writes to Barbara as follows:—

"The year has four seasons, thou but one;  
The spring for ever blooms round thy fresh mouth;

\* Christian Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau, born at Breslau, 1618; died there in 1679, as Præses of the Council. None of his poems were published till the year of his death, 1679; ("Deutsche Uebersetzungen und Gedichte"). Long after his death many of them were published, for the first time, in "Hofmanswaldau und anderer Deutschen Auserlesene Gedichte," 1697-1727.

No winter is with thee; for the light of thine eyes  
 The sun itself can hardly shine.  
 Thou bearest virtue in a purple cup,  
 Adorned, it seems, with whitest ivory;  
 Thy mouth is the resort of a thousand nightingales,  
 Where angel-tongues chime in with the music."

Eva Trott writes to the Duke of Brunswick in these terms:—

"O would that I could change my mouth to honeycomb;  
 Would that my breast were changed into a swan's;  
 Could I but give to thee, with gentle hand,  
 Some pleasure untasted yet by lovers.  
 Could I, like balsam, melt upon thy lap,  
 Methinks the maid, thro' which the Sun must pass (*i.e.* the  
 sign Virgo)  
 Would yield to me in honour;  
 For I am more than her,—she never gets a kiss."

These specimens will suffice to show the style of his poetry.

Lohenstein,\* a younger poet with a more exuberant fancy, goes still further in all the worst features of the school, especially in indecency. In those days, while people lived indecently in France, they wrote indecently in Germany; and thus both these writers were very honourable earnest men, whose lives were quite free from the impurities of their poems. It was only the higher classes, and not the mass of the people, that were infected with this poison. Indeed, from the end

\* Daniel Kaspar von Lohenstein, born at Nimptsch, 1635; died, an Imperial Councillor, at Breslau, 1683. With the exception of "Ibrahim Bassa," which appeared in 1650, and "Ibrahim Sultan," which appeared 1673, his dramas were published between 1661 and 1665. He collected his lyric poems ("Blumen," "Rosen," "Hyacinthen," "Geistliche Gedanken," "Thränen,") in 1680. In Neukirch's collection, mentioned in the preceding note, his "Venus," and other poems, are to be found.

of the thirty years' war to the French Revolution may be pronounced the best, the most moral, and most religious, period of Germany. Lohenstein wrote several dramas, which were highly admired. Also a great number of lyric and descriptive poems. Of the latter, his "Venus" was greatly praised. He is also the author of a romance, hereafter to be mentioned. The bombast of his style is proverbial. Here is a specimen from his tragedy of Agrippina:—

Megæra speaks :

" Arch murderer! (Nero) as the bloody weals,  
Stricken by my serpent-rod,  
Imprint Orestes' swarthy neck,  
Because he slew his mother,  
So shall my whip, with tenfold greater pains,  
Thee crimson: fire and sulphur blacken thee."

Tisiphone :

" Come, sisters, help me bind up rods ;  
Come, lend me your viper hair ;  
Help me to kindle rosin from Phlegethon  
Hither, with tinder, sulphur, pitch ;  
Lay bare his limbs ; use torches, flame, and rod,  
Until the flame is quenched in the murderer's blood."

His best drama, perhaps, is " Ibrahim Bassa." But, perhaps, a specimen from the poems of one of his scholars will show to what an absurd pitch of bombast the school arrived:—

" Nectar, and sugar, and juicy cinnamon,  
Pearly dew, honey, and Jupiter's juice,  
Balsam, that glimmers brighter than coal-flame,  
Of every plant the powers united,  
In flavour these are bitter more than sweet,  
Compared with the nectar of sugary kisses."

All that needs be remarked further is, that the spiritual songs of the Halle school, and also of Zinzendorf, were infected with the absurdities of Lohenstein; and that he and his disciples begot the monster "poetical prose," which is hardly yet exterminated in Germany.

Very little need be said about the other offshoot of the second Silesian School, the "Water Poets" with Weise at their head. In his opinion, every youth who wished to cut a figure in the world, must spend some hours each day in writing verses.\* True to this theory, he made great endeavours to have poetry-writing taught in the German Gymnasia. His efforts were crowned with success; and a precious set of versifiers were produced. Hunold, to wit, who called himself Menantes; and who, in concert with the Pietist School of Franke, at Halle, successfully opposed the voluptuous tone introduced by Lohenstein.† Then, again, Postel, Henrici, Corvinus (*alias* Amaranthes), Hanke, Barthold Feind, von Besser, and J. Ulrich König, whose poems were edited by Gottsched, and highly praised by him for their purity of form, though in matter they are utterly deficient‡,—and lastly, Daniel Wilhelm Triller,

\* "Christian Weise der Gründenden Jugend notwendige Gedanken," 1675 (1690). No. xxvii. p. 72.

† Hunold lived at Halle from 1708 to his death in 1718. He published a collection of poems by various writers, including his own under the name of Menantes, in opposition to the obscene tone of Hofmannswaldau. Here are poems by J. Lange, Bogazky, Knorr von Rosenroth, and Rambach. In p. 745 he speaks out most plainly against the indecent poetry of the day, which he had himself formerly cherished.

‡ Heinrich Postel, of Hamburg, must not be confounded with Nikolaus von Bostel, of Stade, whose poems were first published after his early

the editor of some spurious works of Opitz. As late as 1739 he sang the merits of the poet Brockes in the following strain:—

“Great Brockes, oh! say how far thou’lt go,  
How high thy fame like eagle soar.  
Thy verse, enchantress of the soul,  
Can by its power e’en dead hearts move.”\*  
*etc.*

These pretty poetasters dwelt, for the most part, at Hamburg, and at Leipzig, making Upper Saxony renowned as the fatherland of German poetry and German culture—a renown which Gottsched trumpeted further throughout the rest of Germany, which he contemptuously styled “the provinces.” Nay, even Adelung was thoroughly convinced that their verses would be immortal, and this in the days, not merely of Klopstock and Lessing, but of Schiller and Goethe. “Either,” said he, “Upper Saxony has wholly degenerated from the good taste of 1740—

death in 1708. Barthold Feind was also of Hamburg. He had a talent for writing operas, and was acquainted with Shakespere’s works, a rare accomplishment in those days. Henrici, known under the name of Picander, as the author of frivolous poems, in three volumes. He, as well as Corvinus (*Amaranthes*), and Hanke, were of Saxony. The last is the author of the well-known hunting-song, “Auf, auf! auf, auf, zum Jagen, auf in die grüne Haid,” the basis of many other songs, see his “*Gedichte*,” i. p. 144. Of the regular Silesians of the second School the favourite was Mühlport, of Breslau, a contemporary of Lohenstein. His renown among the christening and wedding poets has survived for more than a hundred years.

\* These lines are to be found in his “*Bethlehemitischer Kindermord*,” p. 62. He also wrote “*Der Sächsische Prinzenraub*,” 1743, a poem in four books, in the manner of Gottsched.

1760, or these provincials (Goethe and Schiller) have got on an entirely wrong track.\*

Between the bombastic poets of the second Silesian School and these wishy-washy rhymesters, there were several intermediate verse-writers who shared the defects of both, but to a more moderate extent. Indeed, some of them remind us, though in a faint degree, of the simplicity of the first Silesian School. Even Weise shows himself capable of better things, chiefly, however, in the prose line. His "Drei Erznarren," a satiric romance, written under the pseudonym of Catharinus Civilis, is by no means one of the worst productions of the day. Johann von Assig and Hans Asmann von Abschatz were also among this intermediate class. They were both natives of Silesia. The latter, in the choice of matter, strongly resembles Hofmannswaldau. Again, Benjamin Neukirch, a Silesian, but resident at Ansbach, disgusted with Lohenstein's want of taste, adopted a more measured and dignified tone. Unfortunately, however, the poems of Neukirch and others, while they dropped high-flown bombast, became, at the same time, dry and empty. They would have nothing to do with the Italians, and knew nought of the best modern French models, let alone the Greek and Latin. (Neukirch took Fenelon's "Telemachus" for an epic, and translated it into German Alexandrines!) Christian Gryphius, son of the elder of that name, had a great idea of Hofmannswaldau, and infinitely preferred him to Opitz. But his tone is more that of the older Silesian School. Like his father, he is

\* Adelung, "Magazin für die deutsche Sprache," 1783.



expert in sad and melancholy poetry. In his poem on the death of his two children, and on the sufferings of his sister, there are touches of genuine feeling. But the writer with most truth about him, notwithstanding all his Hofmannwaldau-esque expressions, is Christian Gunther, of Striegau, whose poems enjoyed a high reputation even in the time of Gellert, Klopstock, and Lessing. Dissolute in habits, but not bad-hearted, he was disowned by his father, and no entreaties on the part of the son could bring about a reconciliation. This circumstance imparts to all his poems referring to it, a warmth and life quite unknown in these days. But this same feature is also discernible in many of his amatory and occasional pieces. If the poem in recollection of his youth is genuine, which is most likely the case, it is much to his honour. His great weakness was, that he could not keep sober, and he died of drink and misery in 1723.

The lamentable condition of German poetry at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century at last produced a reaction; and a literary contest ensued,—the first in the history of German letters. Christian Wernicke—subsequently a Danish Councillor of State—in a volume of epigrams (*“Poetische Versuche in Ueberschriften,”* 1697,) made an onslaught, not only on Hofmannswaldau and Lohenstein, but also on Weise. In these epigrams, which, next to Friedrich von Logau’s, were the best of the time, and are well worthy of attention, he probes the sore in the body poetic to its very bottom, with unsparing hand laying bare the sources of the evil.

Here is a specimen :—

ON CERTAIN POEMS.

“Cæsura ? good ; the Verse ? flows well ; the Rhyme ? adroit ;  
The Words ? in order. Nothing disordered—but the sense.”

This and other similar effusions fired the resentment of the Hamburg poetasters, Postel, Hunold, and Co. Postel replied with a sonnet, wherein he compared Wernicke to a hare hopping about a dead lion (Hofmannswaldau). Wernicke rejoined with a comic heroic poem, “Hans Sachs,” wherein he represents that forgotten poet as the king of all shallow rhymers, and about to crown as his successor on the throne one Stelpo, *i.e.* Postel. Upon this, Hunold entered the lists, and poetic attack and rejoinder followed each other in quick succession.

It was this contest that first shook the universal belief in the incomparable excellence of Hofmannswaldau and Lohenstein. Their worshippers fell off in number from year to year, and the dry rhymers began to obtain the upper hand. Even Hunold himself eventually took part against the impurities of this school, which ultimately disappeared from German poetry ; partly through the influence of Franke and the religious school. But with the banishment of bombast, nothing very great would have been achieved in poetry, unless new matter had been supplied. Had poetry continued in its negative position, it would have been a mere affair of empty rules, and frigid insipidity.

Such were the verses of Benjamin Neukirch and of von Besser ; which for some time served as models for

imitation. But there was too much talent in those who had hitherto been adherents of the Lohenstein school, to attach themselves to mechanical rhymers like Henrici and Corvinus; and they began to look around for some new material, some nobler and more independent shape for German poetry. And it was in this attempt we see the first gleam of the new poetical dawn after a long and dreary night.

Foremost among these heralds of the dawn, stands Friedrich Rudolph Ludwig von Canitz\*, born 1654, died 1699. He and Wernicke were the only ones that did not suffer themselves to be carried away by the stream of a depraved age. In his lifetime, it is true, he exercised less influence than Wernicke, for his poems were confined to private circulation; most of them were first published in 1700 by Joachim Lange, the theologian of Halle. In his didactic poetry, he denounces most emphatically the Lohenstein school, as well as the poverty-stricken exercises and occasional pieces of Weise and his sect. And though in point of matter he himself never achieves anything of importance, yet there is an earnestness and a gravity in his view of human life, which even Wernicke comes short of; while his language is not only more measured, but

\* Born 27th November, 1654; died, a Privy Councillor at Berlin, 11th August, 1699. Unlike the heap of contemporary poets, he was not a prolific writer. His "Satyre über die Poesie," discusses the taste of the day. His two religious poems, "Unser Heiland ist gebunden," and "Wenn Blut und Lüste schäumen," were long known; and almost equally so his dirge on the death of his first wife; an expression in which "Was für Weilen und für Flammen schlagen über mir zusammen," has become proverbial. New editions of his poems appeared from 1700 to 1727. The tenth, 1727, is the best; the later ones follow it.

likewise purer, nobler, and more fluent, than that of Wernicke. By the poets presently to be mentioned Canitz was looked upon as a model, and for a long period he was held to be one of the best authorities. About this same period, we perceive, in the person of a pseudonymous writer, Reinhold von Freienthal, an awakening of poetical taste in Switzerland, which country soon after played so important a part in the development of German poetry. His poems, at all events, show that the yoke under which the Muse groaned was become everywhere insupportable, and that she was gasping for more nature, simplicity, and truth.

Barthold Heinrich Brockes\*, a senator of Hamburg, was one of the first to proceed still further in the path struck out by Canitz and Wernicke. The new matter selected by him was a true and affectionate study of Nature. At times he becomes wearisome by his minuteness of detail. His "Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott," (Earthly Pleasure in God,) for instance, though it contains most felicitous descriptions, is on the whole too long-winded and diffuse. The gossiping tendency of the older period was yet unsubdued, as well as the over-addiction to too much finish of description. Still there is a vast gulf between the empty and babbling monotony of the mechanical rhymsters and the true-hearted verbosity of the Hamburger; a vast gulf between the unreal glaring scene-painting of the se-

\* Born 1680, died 1747. His "Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott" appeared by degrees from 1723 to 1748; the ninth and last part after his death. The first five parts went through many editions. The first seven, in twenty years.

cond Silesian School, and the true, though all too true and microscopical, manner of this simple poet, who studied a snow-flake or the hues of a carnation with most painstaking minuteness. Even in his congratulatory poems, of which he wrote not a few, and in his translation from the Italian of Marino's "Murder of the Innocents," there is a staid and earnest tone, prophetic of the new period of the Halle school, with its Hagedorn and Uz.

Another Hamburger, Michael Richey, much resembled him, as also Karl Friedrich Drollinger, of Baden, a zealous admirer of Canitz and Brockes, and the pioneer of a new period. He also foretold, in 1724, the future influence of Switzerland in German poetry.

### ROMANCE.

After this short survey of the literature of the seventeenth century, it only remains for us to say some words on the Romance, which originated in this period, and, during it, underwent a number of vicissitudes, which are of the greatest interest for the history of culture, if not of poetry.

The oldest prototypes and predecessors of the modern Romance are, partly, the art-epics, grounded on the matter of foreign sagas, partly the poetic tales—especially those of foreign origin—which, disconnecting themselves from the saga, enjoyed an independent existence of their own. With the decline of art-

poetry, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, declined also the taste of the hearing and reading public, first, for the poetic form of these tales, then for the matter of them. Prose was better suited for the then stage of culture, and therefore it is that, besides a few traces of prose versions of foreign epopœi of the thirteenth century, we have in the fifteenth century prose stories from "Tristan and Isolt," "Wigalois," "Flos and Bankflos," also from "Pontus and Sidonia," "Hugschapler," "Lother and Maller," "Fierabras," and many others.\* The German Volksbücher, also, already mentioned, "Kaiser Octavian," "Melusine," "Magellone and Peter with the Silver Key," "Duke Ernest," &c. ;

\* The romance of "Pontus und Sidonia," which was one of the most famous, is the only one resting on a German basis. It is the old English story of the fourteenth century, "Hornchilde and Maiden Rimnild" (Ritson's *Ancient Romances*, iii. 295). Compare J. Grimm in Hagen's "Altd. Museum," ii. 284. "Pontus and Sidonia" was translated from the French in the middle of the fifteenth century, by the Scottish Princess Eleanor, the wife of Duke Sigmund of Austria. It was printed in 1485, and frequently since.

"Der Hugschapler" (Hugo Capet, whose fabulous history it contains) was written at the beginning of the fifteenth century, by Margarethe, Duchess of Loraine. She also composed the romance of "Lother und Maller," which belongs to the Carlovingian group of Sagas. A German translation of it was written by her daughter Elizabeth, Duchess of Nassau-Saarbrücken, in 1437, and printed in 1514. A new version of it was published by Fr. Schlegel, 1805. See his works, vol. vii.

"Fierabras," like "Lother and Maller," belongs to the Carlovingian group, and has been known in Germany since 1533. Together with "Tristan und Isolt," and "Pontus and Sidonia," it forms the contents of v. d. Hagen's "Buch der Liebe," 1809. "Melusine" must be of Celtic extraction. It was translated from the French in 1456, by Düring von Ringoltingen of Bern, and the translation printed in 1474. "Magellone" was first translated into German at the same time as "Kaiser Octavianus," viz., in 1535. The latter, by W. Salzmann; the former, by Veit Warbeck.



at least the half of them can be placed in this category. In the sixteenth century the higher orders, who were becoming more and more estranged from the lower, indulged in this taste for what was foreign, marvellous, and fantastic still more and more. The French literature, in its older poetry and in its more recent prose versions of the same, supplied them with ample materials for gratifying the passion. In addition to the pieces mentioned above, "Tristan," &c., (which were published in 1587 by Feierabend, of Frankfort, in a collection entitled "Buch der liebe,") *Amadis*\* was now imported from France, and with it the term Romance. Besides these tales, based on an old epic foundation, a new sort of composition had arisen in Italy, chiefly through the instrumentality of Boccacio, as early as the middle of the fourteenth century. It was founded on the occurrences of the day, and was hence called Novel; and these novels were diffused throughout Germany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, not in imitations, but in translations.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the heroic saga and heroic lay became quite extinct, and their place was occupied by this romance literature, borrowed from the countries to the south and west of Germany. Translations and versions increased in number. De Rosset's "Traurige Geschichten" was

\* The origin of "Amadis" is still obscure; most likely it is Portuguese or Spanish, and composed in the fourteenth century. In its oldest form it is comprised in four books, which afterwards swelled out to twenty-four. It was brought to Germany shortly before 1569, and published in a German translation by the bookseller, Feierabend, 1569-70.

translated by Martin Zeiller, and became a favourite book with the higher classes. Presently, imitations from the French appeared, all of them in the bad taste of the age, either intolerably dry and prolix, after the manner of the elder, or sprawling and bombastic, after the manner of the younger Silesian School.

Philip von Zesen, mentioned above, was one of the earliest and most popular writers in this line. His love-story, entitled "Die Adriatische Rosemund Ritterhold's von Blauen," though an inconceivably dull affair, is note-worthy from its being the first book of the kind. In the preface he expresses his joy that this sort of composition had now found favour in Germany, after having been hitherto confined to Spain, Italy, and France. "It was high time," he continues, "for Germany to infuse into this sort of literature an 'amiable earnestness;' as all the foreign examples were mere tattle, devoid of pith and vigour." According to his own statement, this was to be his last as well as first novel—a determination which he did not adhere to. In the same way, he did not follow the counsel which he gave his countrymen, not to translate anything from foreign languages. He is the author of at least two other original romances, on biblical and rabbinical subjects: "Simson," an heroic love-story, and "Assenat," the traditional name of the wife of the Patriarch Joseph. The latter, especially, was long a favourite with the reading world, and the matter has been re-worked by Jung Stilling and others. Two other romances were translated by him from the French, "Ibrahim and Isabella's Wonderful History," and

"The African Sophonisbe," both on the model of "Rosemund." Zesen's style is very eccentric. In his later works he is much given to short abrupt sentences, wherein he exhibits a strange contrast to the diffuse, pathetic, dragging style of later romance-writers. At times, however, he becomes quite childish and absurd. His orthography, moreover, and way of rendering foreign words, are odd and perverse beyond belief. In dulness, however, he is far surpassed by his successors in the love-story line, *e. g.* Grimmelshausen, the author of "Proximus and Lympida." As for action, there is none in these romances. In "Rosemund," even, not a little space is taken up with the preparations the heroes and heroines make for writing their love-letters, *e. g.* biting their quills, tearing up the paper, and, when the voluminous epistle is at length completed, it is given at length for the benefit of the reader.

The stories of "Simson" and "Assenat" are by no means confined to love affairs. The latter purports to be a history, not only of love, but of state, and describes at length the Government and Court of Egypt. In fact, a time had now arrived when, instead of describing great and heroic deeds of universal interest, the Romance was for ever twaddling about matters of state, courtly pomps and ceremonies, solemn audiences, and festivals. This was quite in keeping with the Louis Quatorze taste, which now began to hold dominion over Germany, and gave the death-blow to the old mutual fidelity between king and people,—the fatherly kindness of the monarch on the one hand, and the corresponding gratitude of his lieges. So that, in

the long list of heroic and state romances which now followed and found favour with the reading-world, we have a most true mirror of the ideas and culture of the times—indeed this may be predicated of all the German romances from the middle of the seventeenth century to this day.

A touch of the grand is attempted in the succeeding romances, by making the heroes do mighty deeds. A back-ground of seemingly great importance is introduced. This is the case with the two romances, “The marvellous History of the Christian-German-Grand-duke Hercules and the Bohemian Princess Valisca,” and “Hercules and Herculadisa,” by Heinrich Buchholz, court-preacher at Brunswick. The first of these is intended, on the one hand, to counteract the Frenchified taste for “Amadis,” and tales of that class; and at the same time for the spiritual edification of the reader. For this purpose this long-winded tale of conversion to Christianity is thickly interspersed with prayers and spiritual songs. This wonderful composition first saw the light in 1659, when the strange combination of the worldly and the spiritual was unfavourably received by the critics. Notwithstanding which adverse judgment and its own absurdities, it held its ground for a good hundred years. In 1744 this “Christian Romance” appeared in an abbreviated shape, the hymns and prayers being left out. In 1781 it was published in a remodelled form. Soon after the appearance of the above, Duke Anton Ulrich, of Brunswick—known for his hymns, and for his perversion to Rome at a very advanced age—produced his “Love Story of Ara-

mena," and "Octavia, a Roman History." The former was remodelled in 1782. The latter became very famous. In it we have the history of the Roman emperors, from Claudius to Vespasian. But the chief interest of this romance lies in the eighty-and-forty episodes which it contains, abounding with anecdotes of the great and small courts of his time, under fictitious names. To most of these the key is lost; but they are not without moment, as bearing upon the history of contemporary manners and politics. But there was another romance which quite ravished the reading world, and which stood in high estimation for a full century, viz., Heinrich Anselm von Ziegler und Kliphausen's "*Asiatische Banise, oder blutiges, jedoch mutiges Pegu*." The author died young. Adorned with all the prosaic splendours of the second Silesian School, its very opening enchanted every heart. "May lightning, thunder, and hail, the avenging tools of Heaven, shatter the pomp of thy gilded towers, and the vengeance of the Gods consume all the inhabitants of the city, who have worked the downfall of the kingly house. If the Deity permitted it, my eyes could become thunder-pregnant clouds, and these my tears cruel deluges. With a thousand clubs, like a fire-work of just rage, I would aim at the heart of the accursed blood-hound, and certainly not miss it." And could any heart withstand the seductive apostrophes with which a loving princess, dagger in hand, addresses the royal lover who had spurned her? "Behold, then, pitiless tyrant, how splashing blood will cry to the Gods night and day for vengeance on thy insensible heart. Boast not, adamantine

soul, that thy princess hath loved thee to the death, and hath pierced her heart for this love's sake ; for this stab will go through my heart, but through thy soul, — will cause me a passing pain, but thee everlasting torment. Yes ! my bloody ghost shall pursue you to the end of the world ; hourly sweep before thine eyes, and upbraid thee with thy cruelty." Upon this she proceeds to stab herself, but is prevented by an honest soldier. Again, how the responsive heart of the reader must have sympathised with the bliss of the Emperor Balacin and his Princess Banise, who, together with three other royal pairs, after conquering the enemy, were married in the camp. What a captivating description that is, where "those lively generals, Paduck, Mangostan, Martong, and Ragoa, bethought them how they might procure some suitable diversion for the heroic victors. At last they hit upon the clever and graceful expedient of serenading them with a contest, deftly set to music, between Venus and the God of War, wherein it was so arranged that the Goddess of Love should be represented by lutes, harps, and other pleasant stringed instruments of music, accompanied by the sweet voices of twelve Portuguese boys ; while the part of Mars was ably filled by trumpets, kettle-drums, and other warlike instruments, assisted by twelve adults of the same nation."

But a work by Lohenstein himself was intended to be the pink of all romance. "Arminius and Thusnelda," as this renowned story is entitled, was edited by the author's brother, after Lohenstein's early death, A.D. 1689, and was received with thunders of applause.



There is no doubt, however, that, even by contemporaries, this book was more praised than read. To wade through four goodly quarto volumes was a task fitted to exhaust the patience of the most insatiable devourer of romance that ever existed. A second and last edition of it appeared about forty years later. Nevertheless, this work is by far the best that Lohenstein ever wrote, and, notwithstanding its prolixity, is to be preferred, in point of style, to all the other romances that have been mentioned.

A quantity of these "Tales of State, Love, and Heroism," as they were called, appeared. The most expert fabricator in this line was August Bohse, or as he called himself, Talander. Subsequently the historico-political romance came into vogue, and continued to be very popular for some forty years, or till about 1720. It arose out of the secret statesmanship and diplomacy which, owing to various causes, *e. g.* the example of Lewis XIV., the establishment of the permanent Diet, and the system of the European balance of power, now became the order of the day. The diplomatic wisdom, cabinet intrigues, political secrecy, grandiloquence, and make-believe that prevailed in high places, were in these romances acted over again in the most solemn seriousness, generally under fictitious names. Presently they assumed the form of political geography, and before long they became regular political chronicles. One of the oldest is "Aeyquam, or the Great Mogul," by one Hagdorn, date 1670. Eberhard Werner Happel, of Upper Hessa, now made his appearance, who got his living by wandering from place to place

writing bad books. In his "Asiatischer Onogambo" the loves of the Emperor Xunchius and other roaming heroes are described, with the lands through which they travelled. His "Insulanische Mandorell" gives a geographical and historical description of certain islands where the scenes of the love adventures are laid. Then there is his "Italienischer Spinelli;" "Der Spanische Quintana," 1686; "Der Französische Cor-mantin;" "Der Ottomanische Bajazet;" "Der Deutsche Carl," containing the author's own love adventures; with many others, partly by Happel, partly by Rost and others.

Next came the Robisonades, in imitation of De Foe's romance, "Robinson Crusoe," which appeared in 1714. Herein he perhaps had in view the adventures of two or three different personages; *e. g.* Serrano, a Spaniard, who was cast away on the island bearing his name in the West Indian Ocean, and Alexander Selcraig, or Selkirk, who for five years lived on the solitary island of Juan Fernandez. This work appeared in a German translation in 1721, and elicited in Germany, as well as throughout Europe, the greatest admiration and a countless host of imitators. Between 1722 and 1755 more than forty Robinsons appeared in Germany, and were read with frantic eagerness. There were the German Robinson, the Italian Robinson, the clerical ditto; the Saxon, the Silesian, the Franconian Robinson; two Westphalian Robinsons at once; the moral, the medicinal, the invisible Robinson; and even the Bohemian Robinson. Then there was the European Robinsonetta: "Miss Robinson, or the cunning young maid;" "Ro-

bunse, with her daughter, Robinschen," and so forth. The books are generally worse than the titles. After this came the histories of the *Avanturies*, *e. g.* that remarkable book, "*Wunderliche Fata*," &c. ; or, "The marvellous fortunes of certain mariners, especially Albertus Julius, a native of Saxony, who in his eighteenth year went to sea, and with three others was wrecked on a savage rock, after ascending which he discovered a most beautiful country, where he married," &c., by Gisandern. The author's real name was Schnabel, and his book, which came out in four parts, between 1731 and 1743, is better known under the title of "*Die Insel Felsenburg*." It was re-edited in 1825, with an introduction by Tieck. This book was followed by the *Travelling Aventurier*, the *Curious Aventurier*, the *Swiss*, *Bremen*, and *Leipzig Aventuriers*.

The passion for this sort of literature endured for many years. In 1788 the last *Robinsonade* appeared, under the title of "*Wenzel von Erfurt*," and about the same period the old *Robinson* was contracted to the dimensions of a child's story-book by Campe. The tendency of all this literature was quite in keeping with the Deism which had risen up in England and France at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. It was in keeping with the strong inclination manifested everywhere to emancipate oneself from everything historical and traditional ; to begin life, so to say, afresh, with a new state of society and civilisation. It corresponded with the eager zeal then displayed for the palpable and natural, as a counterbalance to the stiff conventionalism, to the

powdered and be-peruked shams that lorded it over society at large. The Robinsonades and Aventuriers effected in the masses of the reading world what Montesquieu and Rousseau did in the learned world, in the the world of rulers over Church and State. Visions of a return to a state of nature long pervaded the community, and Lafontaine's "Child of Nature" is all of a piece with the dreams of Robinson and Rousseau. To the Robinsonian succeeded the Sentimental Romances. After these, in the stormy times preceding the Revolution, the Romances of Knight-errantry and Robbers. Next came the Family Romances, an apt exponent of the political impotence of Germany, when she was by necessity thrown back upon domestic subjects only. And last came the Historical Romance, still in vogue. From the above remarks the truth of the previous assertion will appear—that for two centuries the different phases of Romance have faithfully reflected the manners of the day.

But there is one romance which is generally considered the precursor of the Robinsonades, though in many respects it surpasses them all. We mean the "Abenteuerliche Simplicissimus," which came out in 1669, *i. e.* twenty years after the thirty years' war, or German war, as it was called; and where the events of that war are depicted with uncommon truth and life. The hero of this poetical romance is brought up at the house of a peasant in the deepest solitudes of the Spessart Forest. And the shepherd lad's lonely life is admirably portrayed. Then follow descriptions of the marauding Swedes, their head-quarters at Hanau, the

movements of the troops, the bivouac; and above all, the forays of the Free companions in Westphalia. This work is so fresh and genuine; much of it is conceived in so truly poetic a vein, that, with the exception of Schuppius' writings, the seventeenth century can show nothing comparable to it. The last book would have been better omitted, according to the original plan of the writer, as it bears strong evidences of the times in which it was written. Indeed it is very astonishing that the author of "Simplicissimus" could have concocted such balderdash as "Proximus and Lympida." His name was Christopher von Grimmelshausen; he was a native of Gelnhausen, and magistrate at Renchen in the present Grand Duchy of Baden.\* In "Simplicissimus" he narrates his own personal experiences; in the other what he had learnt and picked up. Hence the poetic life of the one, and the prosy flatness of the other.

Many editions of "Simplicissimus" have appeared. Within the present century it was modernised by Haken, and in 1836 by Bülow.

#### GOTTSCHED.

We have now arrived at a period when German literature is to bloom once more. The flower, however, is not of spontaneous growth, as in the olden

\* His name was only recently discovered, as he concealed it under various anagrams, *e. g.* Samuel Greifson vom Hirschfeld, or Germann Schleifheim von Sulsfort. The person who discovered it was Echtermeyer, in 1838. "Hallische Jahrbücher," 1838, Nos. 52-54. Grimmelshausen died 17th August, 1676. Compare "Passow, Blätter für lit. Unterhaltung," 1843, Nos. 259-264; 1844, No. 119; 1847, No. 273.

times, but the hardly-earned product of much labour and disappointment. In the former case, we wandered over a heath full of exuberant wild flowers shooting up at random from under the rock, or by the side of the brook; here we are in a garden, laboriously reclaimed from the wilderness, with its spruce parterres, its gorgeous flower-beds, its choice exotics. Art has been made to emulate nature, but only by dint of manifold experiments and infinite trouble.

But we must trace the operation more narrowly. As we have seen, in the endeavour to get rid of the bombast of the second Silesian School, poetry affected a jejune simplicity; and so became flat and washy. The first step towards improvement, therefore, was to give it pith and substance. New rules must be laid down; new models found for this purpose. Canitz as we have seen, took the lead in the movement. Still, the time-honoured fashion of elaborating mechanical imitations in verse, not only of the Latin, but what was still worse, of the inferior modern foreign writers, was the great impediment to improvement. While this lasted, the best ancient models, especially the *Greeks*, were not to be thought of. As a first step in the right direction, better modern models were introduced. The inane operas of Italy, which had done so much mischief, were discarded. The attention of the Germans was directed to the French writers, Corneille, Racine, Moliere, and Boileau; to Addison's and Steele's *Spectator*, and to Milton. Which of these two classes of writers ought to be followed; whether Germany should take for her model the regularity of the French, or the



power of Milton ; this was the essence of that dispute between Gottsched and Bodmer, which mainly served to revive the poetic consciousness of Germany.

Johann Christoph Gottsched, a name which became proverbial for haughtiness, bad taste, pedantry, and vulgarity, was the chief of the party which cried up the French and their regularity. The involuntary benefits this man rendered German literature, by serving as a whetstone to sharpen the wits, and provoke the antagonism of other writers, were very great. Still, he had other merits of his own, which have been obscured by his ridiculous pedantry and affected airs. Regard must be had to the peculiar times and circumstances in which he was placed. He it was who, as Professor of Eloquence at Leipzig, first made it his business to put down the exclusive dominion hitherto enjoyed by Latin verse-writing. He it was who first claimed for German poetry a rank equal to, nay, greater than, that of the Latin school-poetry. He it was who taught the higher and more polished classes of the community that French plays were by no means indispensable to the boards, and showed them German pieces constructed on the same rules of composition, style, and language as the French ones. He it was who, after composing several regular dramas, induced Neuber, the actress, at Leipzig, in 1737, solemnly and formally to exile Hanswurst from the German stage. It is true that, in so doing, the last remnant of the old popular vein was thus banished the theatre ; but Hanswurst had become a low and indecent Jack-pudding when Gottsched expelled him. Doubtless, the *proper* thing would have

been to reform and ennoble this popular personage; but to this task neither Gottsched nor his contemporaries were equal. But, at all events, he restored poetry, and especially the stage, to its proper attitude (*Haltung*), although at first this was very stiff and wooden. He introduced better models and fresh rules; although he was foolish enough to make these rules the be-all and end-all of poetry. And it was this crotchet that effected his downfall. Still, it must not be forgotten, that in his "*Kritische Dichtkunst*," (*Critical Art of Poetry*), which was received with much favour on its publication in 1729, he laid down some excellent rules about poetry. Again, his tragedy "*Der Sterbende Cato*," (*Dying Cato*), with its regular earnest versification, put the first stop to the prosy gossiping miscalled tragedies, the stupid comedies, and the sing-song operas that disgraced the boards. By his literary periodicals\*, moreover, he did much to awaken a taste for German language and literature. His historical account of older German theatrical pieces is useful. Nor is his German grammar, unscientific as it is, devoid of merit, considering what sort of treatises in this line were written at that time. Gottsched was at the height of his fame between 1730 and 1740; being the sole dictator of German taste from his throne at Leipzig. In 1740 began his dispute with Bodmer, which ended in his utter discomfiture. Instead, how-

\* His periodicals are, "*Beiträge zur Krit. Historie der deutschen Sprache, Poesie, und Beredsamkeit*," 1732-1744. "*Neuer Büchersaal der Schönen Wissenschaften*," 1745-1754. "*Das Neueste aus der anmutigen Gelehrsamkeit*," 1751-1762.

ever, of acknowledging himself beaten, he some years later, made an attack upon Klopstock, and then upon Lessing, with the old and blunted weapons, and fell, in consequence, into thorough contempt. He died in 1766.

The head of the English or Milton party was Johann Jacob Bodmer of Zurich. In the management of poetic forms he was perhaps inferior to Gottsched, and certainly so in knowledge of the classical models. What he surpassed Gottsched in was a just perception of the essence and true source of poetic art. He knew that this must be lively, feeling, fresh, inartificial fancy ; that poetry, in short, is a work of the imagination. This was the doctrine of Bodmer and his friend Breitinger. It was in diametrical opposition, not only to Gottsched, but to all the Latin school-poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and to the school of Opitz, who held that poetry is an affair of the understanding, of calm deliberation, not of the fancy. Fancy was looked up to by Gottsched's school, true to the dry dulness of the Wolfian philosophy, with an evil eye ; as, in short, the mother of all sorts of irregularities and follies. First learn the rules of poetry, said they, then write poetry. In poetry the rules are everything. In 1721, Bodmer began his journal "Discourse der Märlern," wherein he sought to imitate the style of the "Spectator." But, for nearly nineteen years, his influence on his contemporaries was hardly perceptible, and he was on excellent terms with Gottsched, sharing with him in his worship of Opitz, and passing encomiums on the "Sterbende Cato."

At last, in 1737, the irreconcilable difference of opinion between the Swiss and the Saxons came out in the estimate formed by the two parties respectively on Milton's "Paradise Lost." The dry and Frenchified Gottsched detested Milton from the bottom of his soul; and he attacked him in the second edition of his "Art of Poetry" (1737) with the same weapons as Voltaire had done. This attack he continued in his magazine, "Contributions to the History of the German Language." On this, 1740, Bodmer wrote his "Vom Wunderbaren in der Poesie," which Gottsched, accustomed to consider himself the sole arbiter of taste, replied to with great vehemence. Bodmer rejoined with his "Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemälde der Dichter." The strife was now waged in various periodicals by the two parties, with great earnestness, not unmingled with ridicule and vulgar sarcasm. The result of the fight was, that all the young and lively talents of the age deserted Gottsched and espoused the cause of Bodmer. *Poeta nascitur, non fit*, was his motto. He had shown that genuine poetry must be imbued with the great and the sublime; that it must be natural, not artificial. Poetry must work, said he, upon the reader and hearer, like grand pictures work upon the beholder. And thus it was that he first set going again that taste for poetry, which had been dormant for more than a century.

While this battle was being fought out, other circumstances contributed to impair the authority of Gottsched. The rigour of his dictatorship, which he sought to maintain by all sorts of mean expedients, had long

become insufferable at Leipzig. At last, in 1739, he contrived to fall out with Madame Neuber, the directress of the Leipzig Theatre, who retaliated by introducing him on the stage, to the great delight of the public; while a young poet, named Rost, gave a poetical account of the affair in a poem entitled "The Prelude" (*Das Vorspiel*). At the same time Pyra, also a Saxon, dealt him a mortal blow in a tract entitled "A Proof that Gottsched's Sect is a Corrupter of Taste;" a position which he makes good by an analysis of the "Dying Cato." Gottsched now patronised the most pitiful rhymesters more than ever, declaring them to be incomparable poets; the result of which was that in the evening of his days he was deserted. Goëthe, who saw him, has given us a graphic picture of his state of isolation.

Still in the lower ranks of polished society, as it was called, Gottsched's influence, combined as it was with the French school of poetry, made itself long felt even after his death. People of mediocre understanding liked the mediocre style of Gottsched; it flattered their powers of comprehension. They and their idol set their faces against anything rising above the common-place, and stigmatised it as extravagant and eccentric. Gottsched talked of Klopstock (he always called him Klopstock, asserting that his very name had a blunder in it,) as the "seraphic poet with the misraimic ideas." It is this antipoetic disposition of his, according as it did with the tastes of so many, that prevented Lessing, and then Goëthe, from exercising that influence on the nation that might have been expected. The fact was,

that their poetry fell upon ground that had been stamped hard by Gottsched and his crew.

Bodmer's adherents were of a worthier order: Klopstock, Wieland, who, however, afterwards fell away from him, and Goëthe. He died at the age of eighty-four, 2d January, 1783, having lived long enough to witness the triumph of the ideas which he advocated, a triumph which went beyond his fondest hopes. To the end of his life he was open to the impressions of poetry, and took a friendly interest in the progress of the new school. It was only in maturer years that he was incited by the young Klopstock to attempt writing poetry himself. His "Noachide," an epic on the Deluge, is a failure; indeed, he wrote no poetry worth mentioning. But, though no poet himself, he well knew what genuine poetry is. He it was who first recognised the worth of the old masters, and used his best endeavours to make them better known and esteemed by his countrymen. Germany has to thank him for the first edition of "Boner's Fables," for the first edition of the "Minnesingers," (it was the only one till 1838,) for the discovery and publication of the "Nibelungenlied," and for the preparation towards an edition of "Parcival." But though he thus stirred up the love of national poetry, it must not be inferred that he was fully aware of the true merits of these pieces. Indeed, the time was as yet unable to appreciate them as they deserved.

But we must not pass over Gottsched's followers in entire silence. His wife, Luise Adelgunde Victorie, née Kulmus, was his faithful fellow-labourer in the field



of literature. She translated plays from the French, and Pope's "Rape of the Lock;" wrote original plays, and had a literary correspondence and disciples of her own. In flexibility and versatility of mind she was far superior to her pedantic and precise husband, and not less so in poetic taste. The best thing she has left us are her letters.

When Gottsched's popularity was far on the wane, he met with a young lieutenant of Cuirassiers in whom he thought he had discovered just the man to put forward as a successful rival to Klopstock and his party. This was Christoph Otto von Schönaich, a scion of the princely house of Schönaich-Carolath-Beuthen. He had just written an heroic poem, "Herman oder das befreite Deutschland" (Herman, or the Liberation of Germany). This, Gottsched hastened to present to Voltaire, in manuscript, hoping to coax from him an opinion in favour of it. The poem was then printed with copper-plate illustrations, and dedicated to William VIII. of Hessa, and a preface was added by Gottsched, extolling it to the skies. The poem is written in trochaics, and the first eight lines have a good deal of patriotic freshness about them. It begins: —

"Von dem Helden will ich singen, dessen Arm sein Volk beschützt,  
Dessen Schwert auf Deutschlands Feinde für sein Vaterland  
geblitzt."

"I will sing you of the hero, whose right arm his people saved,  
'Gainst the foemen of his country, whose bright blade like light-  
ning waved."

The rest of the poem is miserably weak and heavy. In spite of this, a second edition appeared in 1753, a

third in 1760, and, which is almost incredible, a fourth in 1805, the year of Schiller's death. The poet was solemnly crowned by Gottsched; and further served his patron by a satire on Bodmer and Klopstock. The title of this is, "The whole Doctrine of *Æsthetics* in a Nutshell," &c. The dedication runs "To the Creator of Spirit, the Seer, the new Evangelist, the Dreamer, the divine Saint Klopstock, the Theologian; also to the Bard of the Deluge, the Patriarchal Poet, the Rabbinical Story-teller, the Father of the Misraimic and Holy Art of Poetry, Bodmer, this collection of new accents is dedicated by the Collectors." This squib was intended to ridicule Klopstock's overloaded language in the "Messiah," which Gottsched looked on as perfectly monstrous. The satire is not without force. But at the time it only served to plunge Gottsched and Schönaich into disgrace. Schönaich's name became a by-word for a bad rhymers; but he survived all his enemies as well as his friends,—Gottsched, Lessing, Bodmer, Klopstock, Gleim, Herder, and even Schiller,—dying on the 15th November, 1807. Another of Gottsched's partisans was Nauman, the author of an heroic poem "Nimrod," who in length of days rivalled Schönaich. Another was Schwabe, who tried to unite the forces of the party in a periodical "*Belustigungen des Verstandes und Witzes*;" but without success. He also wrote a famous satire, "The Ink-stand filled full," in the Bodmer controversy; while another satire of his, "The Critical Almanach," is said to have been the death of Pyra, mentioned above.

Two poets and one satirist now remain to be men-

tioned, who took no part in the Bodmer controversy, but were, notwithstanding, instrumental in bringing about the new period.

Albrecht von Haller\* was one of the brightest ornaments of the University of Göttingen. In his youth he was smitten with the Lohenstein poetry; but by the force of his intellect, perhaps, too, from the circumstance of his being out of the atmosphere of Saxony and Silesia,—he got rid of his fetters, and at the age of one and twenty entered upon another line. Like Bodmer, he selected the English for his models,—chiefly their moral, philosophical, and descriptive poems. He was urged to this by Drollinger. The object he continually keeps in view is the culture and education of national life. Though now and then a trope reminds us of the Lohenstein leaven, yet, on the whole, his style is succinct and close. Much of his writings turns upon the highest problems of knowledge and belief—the origin of evil; wherein he follows the “Theodicee” of Leibnitz. Still, he did for poetry what it was eminently in need of. He rescued it from the follies in which it had floundered for so many years, taught it to rise to noble thoughts and aspirations, and infused into it a tincture of genuine feeling; and therefore we may consider Haller as not belonging to the transition period, but as the beginner of the new period. In the didactic line he had many followers; the best known is Creutz, the author of “The Graves.”

\* Born at Berne, 1708; from 1737 to 1753, Professor of Medicine at Göttingen; from 1753 to his death, 12th December, 1777, resided at Berne, as director of the Bex Saltworks.

Haller's chief poem is "The Alps." Its descriptions of nature are truthful, and may be said to resuscitate a long-forgotten art.

As Goethe has remarked, it was Haller's great scientific reputation that helped to make his influence on poetry so sensibly felt. He also thoroughly routed that most offensive class, the occasional rhymers of the day.

The next poet is Friedrich von Hagedorn\*, the only poet of those times who still lives in the mouth and memory of Germany. As a fable-writer, he has been followed by Gellert, Lichtwer, Zachariä, and Pfeffel. He is the poet of social pleasure and contentment; the writer of Anacreontics in the fashion of Horace. Uz, Gleim, Wieland, and many others, trod in his footsteps. In early life he was a follower of Brockes, and wrote moral pieces and epigrams. In fluency of style and ease of description, few German writers excel Hagedorn. In him we remark the direct influence of Horace, and the first good fruit that German poetry had ever shown of its two centuries-long study of classical philology. Self-reliant and averse to controversy, he would have nothing to do with the dispute between the Swiss and the Leipzigers. But there are proofs enough in his poems that he inclined more to Bodmer than Gottsched. Three of his pieces are still universally known: the fable, "A hungry Hen found a

\* Hagedorn was born at Hamburg, 1708; died there, 28th October, 1754. Like Klopstock afterwards, he led a life of literary leisure, which was a seductive ideal for later poets. A thorough treatise on Hagedorn by K. Schmitt, is to be found in Henneberger's "Jahrbuch," 1855, p. 62-110.

fine Diamond ;” his May-song, “The Nightingale’s ravishing lays are sounding so charming again ;” and, above all, his “John, the merry Soap-boiler,” which he confesses to have borrowed from Burkard Waldis.

The satirist above alluded to is Christian Ludwig Liscow, of Lubeck, the friend of Hagedorn. Most of his satires are directed against private individuals ; but this very circumstance gives them a truth and a sharpness which Rabener’s don’t possess. The sarcasm is, perhaps, on the whole, monotonous ; but it is generally very telling. Although he directs his shafts against obscure individuals, yet these in reality represent very important contemporary phenomena. In the person of Sievers, for instance, he is really attacking the swarms of puffed-up ignoramuses, *e.g.* the Orthodoxians and Wolfians, who, in their struggles against the Pietists, and the inroads of Deism, betrayed their utter incapacity for the task. Nevertheless, the fact of their being aimed at private individuals of little mark, has impaired the estimation of Liscow’s satires in the eyes of the public, and brought personal satire generally into disrepute. Hence the care taken by Rabener to say that “he does not allude to any individual in particular ;” hence, too, the vapid generalism of his satires. Liscow’s best satire, “Das Lob der Schlechten Scribenten,” is conceived in more general terms. It is this which marks him as the man of the Future. But he was soon forgotten ; while Rabener, though vastly his inferior, was preferred before him. He died in 1760 ; and although several critics, entitled to speak with authority, have called attention to his merits, and his satires have

been re-edited by MÜCHLER, yet at present he is very little known.\*

There are not a few other poets belonging to this period who, albeit sprung from Gottsched's school, either soon left him for another master, *e.g.* Klopstock, or though outwardly still adhering to the party of Gottsched, yet in reality took up an independent position.

One of Gottsched's most trusty retainers was Joachim Schwabe, who died at Leipzig, while Professor of philosophy in the University there. In the year 1741 (as we mentioned above, p. 371), he had set up a magazine in the interests of his master, "*Belustigungen des Verstandes und Witzes*" (Recreations of Understanding and Wit). A number of Gottsched's young disciples joined in the undertaking, Gellert, Rabener, Gärtner, Kästner, and others. Disgusted however, with the iron despotism of Gottsched, who, just as the whim suited him, would patronise the most tasteless botchers as well as themselves, many of these youths severed themselves from him entirely, and set up a periodical of their own. Into this no article was admitted until it had been examined by a committee of themselves, and improved or altered as might be thought expedient. Their president was Karl Chris-

\* The opinions on Liscow are as diverse now as ever. Gervinus ("*Neuere Geschichte*," &c., i. 60) says, that he "far excels Rabener in manliness, courage, solidity, and feeling," and that "his style, true to that of the French, is precise, and devoid of fancy, but pure and bold;" an opinion in which Vilmar coincides. W. Wackernagel, on the other hand, "*Lesebuch*," iii. 2, p. ix., says his writings are "tedious pasquinades." Concerning the events of Liscow's enigmatical career, compare Helbig, "*C. R. Liscow*," 1844, and Lisch, "*Liscow's Leben*," 1845.



tian Gärtner (who died at Brunswick in 1791, near eighty years old). Though not the best poet, he was the best critic among them. Next to him stood Cramer, and Adolf Schlegel, the father of the brothers Schlegel. And thus it was that, in the year 1742, a new weekly periodical saw the light, which made quite an epoch in literature, "*Neue Beiträge zum Vergnügen des Verstandes und Witzes*" (New Contributions to the recreation of Wit and Understanding). This publication, which appeared at Bremen, and was, therefore, also called "*Bremische Beiträge*," was the first that was expressly intended for female readers. Rabener soon joined the new party, then Arnold Schmidt, Ebert, and Zachariä; later Gellert and Giseke; also Hagedorn and Gleim, and lastly Klopstock; the three first cantos of whose "*Messiah*" appeared in the pages of the periodical.

The most distinguished person of this school was Christian Fürchtegott Gellert.\* Passing over his Lectures on Moral Philosophy, we shall here consider him as a writer of dramas, romances, fables, and church

\* Born at Hainichen, near Freiburg, in Saxony, 4th July, 1715. Magister at Leipzig; and from 1751 to 1769, Extraordinary Professor of Philosophy. He died 13th December of that year. His fables and tales first appeared in the "*Belustigungen des Verstandes und Witzes*," 1743; a better collection in 1746, 1748, and 1751. Many, however, as for instance, "*Der Informator*," and "*Hans Nord*," appeared first in the "*Lehrgedichte und Erzählungen*," 1754. These fables and tales were soon disseminated throughout Europe. Five or six French translations came out; besides which, they were rendered into Italian, Danish, Russian, &c. His fifty-four religious poems were published in 1757; and in the preface we see the author's great veneration for the old church hymn. The latest edition of his works appeared 1840.

hymns. His dramas are thoroughly Gottschedian in taste. The only difference is, that here and there there is somewhat more flexibility of dialogue. The matter is in the homely Little-Pedlington style. Your Damons and Orgons with their respectable wives, who bore the reader to death. His romance, "The Swedish Countess," hardly yields a jot even to the Adventuriers in strangeness and improbability of plot, while its lecturing tone is not to be borne.

As a fable-writer Gellert ranks higher, though by no means so high as the great popularity of his fables and tales would indicate. In form they, almost without exception, follow Gottsched; the great end and aim of whose poetry (as of Wolf's philosophy) was clearness. In straining to be clear, Gellert becomes over clear and loquacious, and thus degenerates into flatness and common-place. In him we don't find a particle of the poetry of nature. His beasts are only men in disguise; men and women dressed *à-la-mode*. If we do laugh it is not the tedious wit, but rather the grimace accompanying it, that provokes our laughter. How, then, came it to pass that these fables met with such universal applause, that men like Wieland and Goethe undertook to defend them from animadversion? For, as to the absence of poetry in them, Goethe, Herder, Lessing, and the modern critics are agreed. In the first place, the estimation in which Gellert's fables were held is due, in a great measure, to his high personal qualities, which are clearly impressed in many of these fables. So pure and noble was his character, so imposing, and yet withal so mild and unpretending, that an attack

upon his poetry would for thirty years after his death have been considered high treason. In the fables of Gellert the public saw and loved Gellert the man,—a love which still continued so long as the tradition of his goodness lived in the memory of the people. But there was also another cause for his popularity. Gellert's fables are just the sort of thing to interest unpoetical matter of fact people, who look upon poetry merely as making comprehensible in a picture what otherwise it is not easy to comprehend. With them poetry is nought, if there is not something tangible about it; if it does not confer some practical solid benefit; if, in short, it is not as plain as a pike-staff. Gellert's poetry taught them something; they profited by it. It is schoolboy diet, the diet of beginners and learners. It is a step to improvement, and in this light it was viewed and defended by Goethe.

Gellert's spiritual songs were no less popular, and continue to be so to the present day. They have even been used as church hymns, though they hardly exhibit a vestige of the old Evangelical hymn. Written in the lecturing, instructing style of the Gottsched school, they are more didactic songs *for* the people, than Christian songs of joy and woe emanating *from* the people; and that is the reason why they have never gone home to the heart of the masses. Cold and passionless, instead of praising the deeds of the Almighty, they are for ever occupied with man and his struggles, his good resolutions and bad fulfilments, and, at the best, only rise into the form of contemplative prayer. Like the fables, they owed much to the personal repu-

tation of the writer; more, perhaps, to the spirit of the age, which began to regard Christianity less as a fact than a doctrine. They do not, like the fables, indicate a step towards improvement, the beginning of something better; but the commencement of that utter decay, which, soon after Gellert, overtook the Evangelical Church hymn.

Gellert's successors in the Church hymn were Johann Andreas Cramer and Johann Adolf Schlegel, the middle of the three brothers Schlegel. Cramer also wrote odes, wherein he approaches rather to Klopstock. The remaining German fable-writers may as well be mentioned here, as, strangely enough, they are almost entirely disconnected with the progress of poetic culture, and are, for the most part, after the Gottsched-Hagedorn cut. Next after Gellert is Magnus Gottfried Lichtwer.\* His fables were called by Johann

\* Lichtwer was born at Wurzen, 1719; died at Halberstadt, 1783. His fables first appeared 1748; an improved edition, 1758 and 1762; a new edition, 1828. Johann Gottlieb Willamov, of Morungen, in East Prussia, died at St. Petersburg, 1777; his fables in dialogue appeared 1765. Johann Benjamin Michaelis died at Halberstadt in 1772, when twenty-six years old; his poems, consisting of fables, songs, and satires, appeared in 1768, and indicate much immature talent. Gottlieb Wilhelm Burmann, of Hirschberg, in Silesia, lived an eccentric life at Berlin. Gottlieb Konrad Pfeffel, of Colmar, where he long had an educational establishment, became blind at twenty-one years of age; he died 1809. His fables, which are mostly imitations from the French, were written 1762-1774; also some more in 1783. He was the representative of the jejune enlightenment of the day. After him, fable was long quiescent, until it was revived by Abraham Emanuel Fröhlich (born at Brugg, in the Aargau, 1796); a priest of Aarau. His fables were published in 1825, and are imbued with a real spirit of poetry. He also wrote other poems, and may be pronounced one of the truest and deepest singers of modern times.

v. Müller "Gellertian Professors of Morality." This is not true. There is often much originality and life about them; and so much individuality and truth in some of the pictures from animal life, that they almost look like fragments of the old animal-epic. These fables are often spoilt by the moral appended to the end. Thus the celebrated one of "The Cat and the Master of the House" is spoilt by the moral of the broken mirror, and the evil effects of blind zeal. Others more in the narrative style are excellent, *e. g.* "Die Seltsamen Menschen," and "Der Kleine Töffel." The first edition of these fables was recommended by Gottsched. It was this, perhaps, that led Lessing and Rammler into an extraordinary literary misdemeanour. Unknown to the author they rewrote sixty-five out of Lichtwer's hundred fables, and published them under his name, of course to his great chagrin. One effect, however, of this proceeding was, that in the next edition he introduced considerable improvements.

Lichtwer was succeeded by Willamov, who wrote fables in dialogue; then by Michaelis, Burmann, and Zachariä, who, like Hagedorn and Gellert, followed Burkard Waldis, and other older writers. Next comes Pfeffel, who at first imitated Gellert, but afterwards Florian. He and Gellert are the only fable-writers who have got into the hands of children; and yet Gellert is not so decidedly superior to any of the other fable-writers; nay, in many points he is unquestionably below Lichtwer and Burmann. Pfeffel, too, surpasses him in expression, though not in matter; while the

former's views of life are as dry and insipid as they can be.

Another branch of this Saxon School was Rabener, the satirist, who was briefly mentioned above in connexion with Liscow. The performances of this man bear no sort of proportion to his high reputation. This rested on pretty much the same basis as we have seen Gellert's did. He wrote what the dullest people would find amusement in. He confined himself to the lower circles of society, with their paltry and insignificant follies; never ascending to the higher regions, where it would have perhaps been not so easy for his readers to follow him. For instance, he never refers to the contest between the poetical schools, then raging; never alludes to the struggle going on between national life and the prevailing French culture, and the vices of the latter, so glaringly manifest among the higher classes. But it was this very timidity, this limited sphere to which he confined himself, that made him popular with the many, who seldom know what real satire is, and still seldomer can endure it; while they set uncommon store by wit of the conventional sort. In the dull squireens, informers, lady's maids, misers, and schoolmasters of Rabener we behold the triumph of Gottschedian prosiness and dry common-place. His writings are a striking testimony to the fact that immoralities and absurdities, common, with slight variation, to all times, are not the proper subjects for satire. The follies peculiar to a particular age and race, the particular mania with which the most exalted of the nation are bitten; the struggle between two dia-



metrically different worlds of culture; such must be the theme of poetic satire. Something great, in short, universal, distinctive. A satirist that has no eye to observe this sort of thing, or, like Rabener, no courage to attack it, has nothing left to talk about but the petty weaknesses and meannesses of the everyday world. Hence the tameness that pervades his writings. Indeed, many of the squibs and lampoons that appeared on the subject of the Bodmer and Gottsched controversy are much more like real satire than the so-called satires of the Saxon Commissioner of Taxes.\*

Another poet who has been greatly over-rated was Justus Friedrich Wilhelm Zachariä.† Zachariä exhibited much poetic precocity, and at the early age of eighteen brought out the "Comic Epopœa," as he called it, in the manner of Pope. Gottsched took the young student by the hand, and in 1744 a well-known production of his appeared in Schwabe's periodical, "Recreations," &c. This was the "Rennomist," in which a lively picture is drawn of the doings of the students of Jena, their brutality, beer-drinking, sword-whetting, and beating the watchmen; and this in the traditionary style of epic poetry. There is very little

\* Gottlieb Wilhelm Rabener, born at Wachau, in Saxony, 1714; died at Dresden, 1771. He began his career as a satirist in 1737, with his only metrical piece, "Beweis dass die Reime unentbehrlich sind." His other satires came out chiefly between 1742 and 1748, in the "Be-lustigungen des Verstandes," and in the "Bremische Beiträge." He published a collective edition, 1751; and between then and 1777, his works went through eight editions.

† Born at Frankenhausen, 1726; died, a Professor at Brunswick, 1777. He flourished from 1744 to 1763. His "Fabeln und Erzählungen in Burcard Waldis Manier" appeared later, viz. 1771.

of the comic in these pages. The best part of them are the scenes of student-life. Not that there is a grain of poetry in them; but the circumstance that people had long been accustomed to an absence of all truth in description obtained for them a popularity which in poetical times would not have fallen to their lot. "Die Verwandlungen," another epopœa of his, appeared in the periodical called the "Bremische Beiträge," while others came out in a separate form, *e g.* "Schnupftuch" (a variation of Pope's "Rape of the Lock"), "Phaeton," and "Murner in der Hölle." Both these are not in the rhymed Alexandrine, hitherto in vogue, but in the Klopstock Hexameter. All these poems are very stupid, and still more so the two following descriptive pieces, which long enjoyed a high repute: "Die Tageszeiten," in imitation of Kleist's "Spring," full of forced poetic descriptions, and what is worse, of the oddest digressions; and the "Four Ages of Woman."

Abraham Gotthelf Kästner adhered to Gottsched during that poet's lifetime, and afterwards abstained from joining any of the new Schools of Poetry. But in no respect can he be considered as one of the regular Gottsched School. He enjoyed a high reputation in the literary world, and was, moreover, a staunch opponent of the novel ideas in Church and State then prevalent. His poems are chiefly didactic; but it is with his epigrams that we have here to do. About half of them appeared in Gottsched's periodicals, the rest were written at a later period. In 1781 an edition of them appeared at Darmstadt, by Höpfner, contrary

to the wishes of the author ; another by Justi, with his consent, in 1800, the year in which he died. His epigrams are excellent. We will mention a few. That on Kepler ; on the battle of Rossbach (Græcè Hippocrene) ; on the poet growing old ; and on the motto, “Non datur vacuum.” It is against Klopstock and his manner that the following lines are directed :—

“So toll erhaben Gewäsch in reimlos ametrischen Zeilen ;  
Seh ich für Verse nicht an, mir ist es rasende prosa.”

“Such madly exalted wish-wash, in lines without metre, and rhymeless,

I don't think are verses at all, but only some prose run distracted.”

Bodmer's eccentricities, *e. g.* his writing y for the German ü, and printing his works in Latin letters, came in for a share of his sarcasm. The hardness and emptiness of his style are also attacked in the following epigram : —

“Seht die epischen Zeilen, frei vom Masse der Sylben  
Frei vom Zwange des Reims, hart wie Zyrchische Verse,  
Leer wie Meisnische Reime ; Seht, der glyckliche Kynstler  
Fyllt die römischen Lettern, wie pythagorischen y y  
Zum Ermyden des Lesers, besser zu nytzende Bogen.”

There are also two good epigrams of his, ridiculing the fantastic dreams of freedom in the days of the Revolution. One is headed “Freiheitserklärung,” the other “Allemands grands Admirateurs.”

Three weeks before his death, at the age of eighty-one, Kästner wrote his own epitaph, “Von müh und arbeit voll,” &c., which is more remarkable for its

Christian spirit than for any literary merit. Rendered into English, it runs thus : —

“ Full of pains and labours, my life lasted long ;  
Yet rejoicing withal in His service, who lent me power ;  
Believing in the Son, who gave Himself for us,  
And of good cheer, I pass into eternity.”

A few words here on Johann Arnold Ebert, of Hamburg, who, like Zachariä, resided subsequently in Brunswick. It is chiefly as the representative of English literature in North Germany, as Bodmer had been in South Germany and Switzerland, that he is remarkable. But he did much more than Bodmer ; he translated for the “ *Bremische Beiträge*,” Glover’s “ *Leonidas*,” and, in 1760, Young’s “ *Night Thoughts*,” which for a great many years exercised an extraordinary influence on the reading public of Germany. Soon after, he gave to the world translations of Richardson’s novels, “ *Grandison* ” and “ *Pamela*,” and then of “ *Osian*.” For a long time German literature was deeply infected with the peculiarities of this sort of writing ; its affectation of profound thought, its exquisiteness, its diffuseness, its touching sentimentality. Indeed, the sentimental period, of which more anon when Werther comes to be discussed, is intimately connected with these imitations from England.

Lastly, the dramatists of this era of preparation demand our notice, with the two Schlegels at their head. The youngest of the three brothers, Heinrich Schlegel, only translated English pieces. He it was who, toge-

ther with Ebert, spread the taste for English literature in North Germany. He also superseded the Alexandrine by the Iambic of five feet ; which Lessing afterwards used in his drama of "Nathan," and by this means brought it into general vogue. Schiller likewise made use of it in his tragedies.

But to revert to the two elder brothers. Of these, the eldest, Johann Elias Schlegel, is the foremost representative of the pre-Lessingian drama. From his example we learn, what an enthusiasm for national literature Gottsched, dry and wooden though he was, managed to awaken in the breast of the German youth. The reason of which is, that Gottsched's reforms touched exactly that point where it was most acutely and universally felt that reforms were wanting, viz. the Drama. While a schoolboy at Pforta, Schlegel used to write dramas and act them with his school-fellows. As he grew up he continued the pursuit with the greatest ardour, incited thereto by Gottsched, who introduced some of his plays upon the Leipzig boards. These plays, which met with unmeasured praise from all sides, are, no doubt, better than Gottsched's. The comedies have more life about them ; but still they are very tedious, the "Müssigänger" especially ; the "Geheimnissvolle" less so. Of the tragedies, "Kanut" only need be mentioned. Their fault is deficiency of action and superfluity of talk ; poetry they have none. Schlegel died in 1749, in the thirty-first year of his age, of over-much work. Many of his contemporaries succumbed in the same manner, *e. g.* Lessing's friend, Mylius ; Von Brawe, at the age of twenty ; and Von

Cronegk, at six and twenty. The latter's tragedy of "Codrus" did not appear till 1757. It is an imitation from the French, though at the time it was praised for its incomparable originality. We here have a painful example of the unsteady, indefinite manner in which the dramatic writers cast about them for a subject; now disinterring something from the distant past, and tricking it out with modern patchwork to render it palatable; now drawing upon the most trivial productions of the present.

Although a hundred years have elapsed since then, Germany has not advanced much in the drama, in spite of the teaching of Lessing, and Goethe, and Schiller.

Christian Felix Weisse\* is a dramatist, who, though of later date, yet in the main wrote in the style of the older Saxon (Gottsched) school. At all events, he does not follow Lessing, although he was long intimate with him. His earliest and best works were written at the time when Gottsched, though already beaten, was still prolonging his contest with the Swiss and with the followers of Klopstock. It was reserved for Weisse to give him the *coup de grâce*. At the instance of Lessing he first essayed comedy, and with some success. In 1749 his "Matrone von Ephesus," and his "Leichtgläubige," were favourite pieces. In 1752 he gained great applause by his "Die verwandelten Weiber oder

\* Born 28th January, 1726, at Annaberg; died, as Upper Secretary of Taxes, at Dresden, 16th December, 1804. He flourished, as poet, from 1750 to 1770. From 1760 to 1795, he edited the "Bibliothek der Wissenschaften," &c., a periodical which, together with Wieland's "Merkur," and Nicolai's "Deutsche Bibliothek," was the oracle of æsthetics.



der Teufel ist los," taken from the English piece, "The Devil to Pay." This is now forgotten, all but the song in it, "Ohne Lieb und ohne Wein was wär unser Leben." This play put Gottsched in an incredible passion. In his "Büchersaal" he attacked his former pupil, Weisse, as a young man who, with unheard-of audacity, was undoing all the good he (Gottsched) had done towards improving public taste. Not content with this, he assailed Dieskau, the Directeur des Plaisirs at Dresden, with the most earnest importunities, not to permit Weisse's play to be acted. His petition was written in most comical French, and was published by the other party, for which Gottsched brought an action against them. Rost, whose attack on Gottsched in the "Vorspiel" has already been mentioned, also known for his licentious pastorals, put the whole transaction into doggerel verse under the title, "Schreiben des Teufels an Herrn Gottsched, Kunstrichter der Leipziger Schaubühne." The effect of this squib was indescribable. But what made the joke still better was, that Count Brühl, of Dresden, to whom Rost was private secretary, and to whom Gottsched preferred complaints of the treatment he had received, made the luckless victim read the squib, of which he complained, in his presence. From that day Gottsched was extinct in a literary sense, and it was Weisse who had brought about the catastrophe. The next play he wrote was the "Lustige Schuster," also from the English—the verses in which, "Minister flicken am Staate," are still known. Then followed "Poeten nach der Mode," a weak affair, but which was so far of importance that

it attacked the parties both of Gottsched and Klopstock. From this date the latter party cut his acquaintance.

The merit of these plays is that their language is more pliant and flexible, more suited to comedy, than had hitherto been the fashion. They took with the middle classes even more than the comedies of Lessing, which appeared at the same time, although they can hardly in any respect be compared with them. Subsequently Weisse attempted tragedy. He wrote "Edward III." and "Richard III." The latter of these was an uncommon favourite, although full of Frenchified phrase and mouthing—quite, in fact, in the antiquated Gottsched style, which Lessing attacks in his "Dramaturgy." His "Romeo and Juliet" won still greater laurels. It is from other sources beside Shakspeare, and this to its manifest disadvantage. His last tragedy was "Jean Calas," a piece replete with emotions, exclamations, and exaggerations. Between his "Richard" and "Romeo" his operettas intervened, which, unfortunately, were long in vogue, *e. g.* "Lottchen am Hofe;" "Die Liebe auf dem Lande," after the French; "Annette et Lubin;" "Die Jagd," in which occurs the well-known song, "Als ich auf meiner Bleiche mein klares Garn begoss;" the "Erntekranz," and, lastly, the "Dorfbarbier." These pieces were of course regarded with high disfavour by Bodmer, who beheld in them the return of the French frivolity. In fact, they are a recurrence to the jingling, empty, sing-song pieces which Gottsched had attacked and driven from the stage fifty or sixty years before, at the beginning of

the century; so that he was partially right, after all. Marvellous as it may seem, these operettas ruled the boards when Lessing was at the height of his fame, and his "Minna von Barnhelm" was already written. Weisse possessed great facility of composition, being able to write a tragedy in fourteen days in the midst of his avocations as a collector of the revenue. He also wrote lyric songs, "Scherzhafte Lieder," which were much admired; his Amazonian songs still more so; but they are now forgotten, as they deserve. Most enduring were his merits as a writer for children. His "Kinderfreund" is a continuation of Adelung's "Weekly Paper for Children." It commenced in 1775, but bears the unmistakable stamp of the old Saxon school. His songs for children are in an unsufferably pedantic tone. He tells us how alarmed he was to hear sung at the cradle of his first-born the stupid old nursery rhymes. But of all the nursery rhymes he ever wrote, not one is equal to the old song, "Wenn der jüngste Tag will werden, fallen die Sternlein auf die Erden," which still lives on, while his are forgotten. Little better are his songs in which he wished to compel children to sing the praises of diligence, "Süsser angenehmer Fleiss, o wie herrlich ist der Preiss," or, "Morgen, Morgen, nur nicht heute," which are more than half Gottschedian in tone.

Some other poets of this period—Kleist, Uz, and Gleim—are more allied to Klopstock, though still distinct from him. They will be described after him.

## KLOPSTOCK.

Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock\* was a man of great mental endowments, and whose superiority was universally acknowledged from the very commencement of his career. Although he advocated the views of Bodmer, and formed his epic on the basis of Milton,—although, moreover, he resembled in style, language, and ideas the authors of the “*Bremische Beiträge*,” yet there are features in his poetry distinct from all these. As for Gärtner, Gellert, and Schlegel, everybody felt that, in comparison with Klopstock, they were nothing; their day was past, and a new era of poetry had commenced. Something of a like nature occurred in the first classical period of German literature. Heinrich von Velledin exercised an influence over his contemporaries no less sudden and magical. He created a new verse, a

\* Born at Quedlinburg, July 2, 1724; died at Hamburg, March 14, 1803. During his residence at Schulpforte (1739–45) he conceived the poetical idea of his “*Messias*,” which he wrote at Leipzig, 1746–1748. His odes to Fanny (Friederike Schmidt) were written while he was tutor at Lagensalza, 1748–1749. In 1750 he resided some time with Bodmer at Zurich. From 1751 to 1771, chiefly in Copenhagen, whither he was invited by the Danish Minister Bernstorff, and received a pension that he might have leisure to complete the “*Messias*.” From 1771, until his death, with the exception of a short residence in 1775 at Carlsruhe, he lived at Hamburg. His long life was one of “happy leisure” for the Muses. His existence was chequered only with the joys and sorrows of domestic and social life; which explains a good deal not only in his poetry, but in the productions of his school. Much light is thrown on his interior life in his descriptions of his relations with his wife (Meta Moller, called Cidli in his odes; married 1754, died 1758), and of her death in the eleventh volume of his works. Klopstock’s *Werke*, Leipzig, 1798–1817, Göschen.

new language, new ideas, a new poetry. Still there is this difference between him and Klopstock: Veldekin found his materials ready to his hand, and it is chiefly in form that he employed his eminent talents. Klopstock, on the other hand, although he is novel, and grand, and creative in the form of his verse, is still grander and more creative in respect to the matter.

Klopstock was German to the core. German in earnestness and depth, in domestic feelings, in love of fatherland, German in simplicity and truth, and in his strong sympathy with nature. For a hundred and thirty years—ever since national feeling had become extinct—there had been no end of talking about the German language, German poetry, German heroism, and what not. Every year poetry was to be more German than ever, and every year it was less so. The reason was, that the whole herd of *soi-disant* “Germans” had no nationality about them. Klopstock at last appeared upon the scene. He did not make a great parade about trying to be German, but was German, heart and soul. And it was his example that awakened an interest, sincere and universal, in Germany’s past history—an interest which all the Arminiuses and Thusneldas of a Lohenstein, the Wittekindes of a Postel, the Hermanns of a Schönaich, and even Bodmer himself, had failed to excite. And yet, strangely enough, Bodmer had taken a right way to accomplish this, and Klopstock a strange and roundabout one, which did not so much differ from that followed by Lohenstein, Postel, and Schönaich.

A second prominent element in Klopstock’s character as a poet is his vivid Christian belief. Here, too, he

may be called new and creative. We don't pretend to assert that there had not been true Christians before him, or that, in the century preceding him, Christian poets had not poured forth their faith in a flood of inspired hymns; but since the days of the Reformation, except in the Protestant church-hymn, the spirit of Christianity had never been proclaimed with such truth and fervour, in tones so striking, so universally touching. Certainly it had never been so much part and parcel of a poet's existence, since the olden days of a Conrad, a Lamprecht, and a Wolfram von Eschenbach. Not to the Church alone, but to all the world, Klopstock sang of the redemption of sinful man. Bold and free, he spoke from the depths of his soul, of Christianity, not as of a doctrine, but as a fact. The Saviour was *his* Saviour, whom he embraced with all the power and warmth of his soul. It was the *person* of the Redeemer that inspired his song, that gave it a form and consistency. Nor must we forget that for more than a hundred years before Klopstock, even in the Reformed Church, Christianity had become a matter of doctrine, of erudition, a dead conventional formula. The official psalmody of the Opitz school abundantly testifies to this cold Christianity of custom. In the spirit of Spener, Klopstock rose up with all the fire of his testimony against this dead belief. The bitter contests between the Pietists and the Orthodox party were over, and had been succeeded by a greater indifference than before. Be as hard with Klopstock as we will,—say his poetry is subjective, arbitrary, uneclesiastical,—say that it produced a profitless religion of emotion,—yet



after all, we must allow that he was endowed with a Christian enthusiasm, quite new in those days, full of truth and poetry, kindling a similar fervour in his contemporaries.

The next peculiarity of Klopstock is, that he was the first to make the measures and forms of classic antiquity the vehicle of German thought and German matter. In national feeling and Christian feeling, the old German poets were his equals; but in this third feature he excelled them. There had been a long fight waged between classical lore and German nationality. For two hundred years the study of the classics had been carried on with intense zeal, throwing national feeling into the back-ground, and for a space of one hundred years German poetry and German feeling were all but extinguished by it. And yet what fruits had this sovereignty of the classics borne? During all this period the Germans had not even learnt the true value of the antique models. The "polished" Virgil was pronounced superior to Homer, as is clear from the conversation between Gellert and Frederick II. The most wooden, stiff imitations of the classics were brought to market, not containing a spark of antique poetical fire. Germany, in fact, was for centuries at school, cudgeling its brains to no purpose, "ever learning, and still not able to get to the knowledge of the truth," till Klopstock appeared, shut the school doors, applied what had been learned, and transformed school-exercises into breathing, living, original poetry, but in the form and measure and mode of thought of the antique. Klopstock borrowed the grand ideas of

the ancient epic and inspired ode, and grafted them on the German stock. The ancient measure, too, which had so often been tried in vain, he took and adapted to German poetry. Not that his blank verse, his hexameters, and the form of his odes are by any means perfect models of versification. But the great good he wrought by introducing blank verse was, that he put an end to that mechanical rhyming and sing-songing,—that notion that sound was everything and sense nothing; and thus he made great and lofty and poetical ideas the pith and marrow of German verse. So, then, it appears that these three qualities,—nationality, Christian feeling, and anti-pedantic spirit, combining harmoniously together, for the first time, in the person of Klopstock, made him what he was.

Another peculiarity of Klopstock, personally and poetically, is what we will call his universal sympathy; in which he is the representative of a numerous class of followers. Nothing of the kind was known to the early times of poetry. This is due to the reaction then so prevalent against the heartless ceremonial, the formality and hypocrisy of society. People were tired of hollow masquerade, and wanted to have something like genuine feeling; a touch of nature unfettered by the trammels of conventionalism. It was this same instinct which made the Robinsonades and Aventurier stories so popular.

Friendship with Klopstock and his school amounted to a consuming passion. They were all feeling and sentimentality, pathos, tears: always in a transport of ineffable sympathy. “Weinende Augen,” “tearful eyes,”

play a conspicuous part in his poetry. But this excess of emotion is not confined to his heroes and heroines, it was the life of his school, and the admirers of the works of Richardson. They laid a wonderful stress on the momentary feelings and impulses of each individual. This sickly sentimentality, when applied to social and political matters, passed into the ideal, the visionary, and unpractical. They became incapable of forming a correct judgment of the real state of things in the world around them. Hence it was that Klopstock, the poet of the century, the man of his age, fell into such inconceivable errors respecting the essence of the French Revolution. Not that he was revolutionary in his ideas, but he was a visionary, and it was this very vague hunting after the ideal and the unreal that in France led to wild and bloody incendiarism. The evil effects of this idiosyncrasy of mind are clearly stamped on his poetry. It deals too much in vague sensations and impulses. It is ever attempting to express what is inexpressible ; and, while approaching a high pitch of lyric sublimity, it often fails in plastic firmness. Instead of true and simple language, descriptive of true and simple life, it frequently indulges in the rhetoric of effeminate sentimentality.

Klopstock conceived the first idea of his poem, "The Messiah," while yet a pupil at Schulpforte. The inspiration was due partly to a dream he had, partly to the "Paradise Lost." Indeed, much of the colouring is evidently borrowed from Milton's poem. The method chosen by him to represent the scheme of Redemption is what the Germans call "the objective mythological,"

*i.e.* the course of the transaction is described, not as it visibly occurred before man on earth, but as it was shaped in the councils of God the Father and God the Son in Heaven. The disadvantage of this method of treating the subject—instead of the other two ways he might have taken, *viz.*, those of describing Christ's works on earth, or the effects of the Gospel in converting men,—is, that it admits of very little action; if the actions of the Almighty alone are to be represented. If, on the other hand, the author had travelled out of the record, and introduced action of his own invention, he would very likely have thereby offended the Christian sense, and been wandering into the monstrous and fantastic. It is in this dilemma that he is involved throughout the poem. Hence its want of epic repose. Owing to the paucity of action it often merges from epic into the region of descriptive poetry. The whole abounds with speeches, conversations, and descriptions, which are interrupted with remarks that the thing described is indescribable. Episodes, too, are frequent, which often pass into rhetorical and lyric effusions. The action, what there is of it, or, as we may call it, the Christian mythology, often hovers on the extreme verge between the allowable and the objectionable. It is a proverbial saying that very few people have been able to read the "Messiah" from the beginning to the end. There are two reasons for this: first, the extreme length of the poem, secondly, the manifest falling off in poetic warmth after the tenth canto. When the author began his task he had no clear conception of it as a whole. In fact, he was engaged upon it full five and twenty years. The

first three cantos appeared in 1748; the two following in 1751; from the sixth to the tenth in 1758; the eleventh to the fifteenth not till 1769, and the five last in 1773. The second half is not the produce of unconscious inspiration; it is artificial and laboured. This remark is not inapplicable to the much-admired description of the death of Mary at Bethany, in the twelfth canto. The first ten cantos, however, are a fine specimen of grand and touching descriptive poetry.

It is in his odes that the excellence of Klopstock as a poet is most apparent. His muse here, less encumbered by the weight of the theme, takes a more measured and majestic flight. Indeed, in the latter part of the Messiah, he threw aside the hexameter and inserted a number of lyric pieces and hymns instead. In his odes we see his own personal qualities strongly reflected; his religious feelings; his kindness; his patriotism. There is, however, a wide difference between his earlier and later odes. The former, written before 1760, when he was quite a young man, are full of fiery enthusiasm and sublime rapture, wherever God and the Redeemer are the theme. Is friendship the subject, his verse is fervid and manly. Does he sing of Fanny or Cidli, he overflows with deep manly affection, and most touching, though not morbid, melancholy. Lastly, when he essays to raise a monument to the glory of his country, *e. g.* in "Heinrich der Vogler," "Hermann und Thusnelde," &c., there is a proud tone of independence and self-reliance expressed in simple and natural language.

With regard to his love-odes, they are not, like most love-odes had been since the days of Opitz, pure imagination. On the contrary, like the songs of the old Minnesingers, which they resemble in tone (although Klopstock did not know it), they are addressed to some real object of his affections. We may here remark, that in this respect Klopstock's example has been followed by all the erotic poets since. His later odes, especially those written after 1770, are, with few exceptions, remarkably cold. The religious ones affect grandeur of expression and description. Those to his fatherland are disfigured by scraps of Northern mythology foisted into them. The rest are generally upon unsuitable topics. In most, the language is artificial, the style obscure, or they are unlyrically didactic.

Klopstock is also known as the author of hymns, some of them original, others, older ones remodelled. But they wanted the popular element which is essential to the church hymn. They represent æsthetic and refined religious sensations rather than facts. His celebrated hymn, "Auferstehen ja auferstehen," is no exception. They may be called spiritual songs, but not church hymns. And then they are too much occupied with self, too full of emotion or whining sentiment, which resolves itself at last into mere nonentity. Klopstock's dramatic poetry is of no great importance. He wrote three biblical pieces; the oldest of these, and the best, "Adam's Tod," is, after all, a mere luscious idyll. The two others "Salomo" and "David," are complete failures.



Besides these, he wrote three "Bardiete," as they are called. The earliest, which appeared in 1769, and was dedicated to the Emperor Joseph, is entitled the "Hermannsschlacht." It met with great applause, and yet it is difficult to imagine a more utter mistake. The contrast here between the heroism portrayed, and the overstrained sentimentality and morbid effeminacy with which it is invested, is quite revolting. The caricatures of the Druids and Bards, their songs and sacrifices, are beyond bearing. In this piece is clearly impressed the influence of "Ossian," which first became known in Germany in 1764. There is that same unpoetical mixing up of old characters and modern sentiment, which has contributed so much to the depravation of taste. These vagaries of Klopstock's were diligently imitated by his admirers, in their "Bardenpoesie" ("Poetry of the Bards").

Of Klopstock's prose works the less said the better, as in them he becomes quite trivial and childish. He lies buried at Ottensen, under a linden tree, by the side of his beloved Meta.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing\*, the other awakener of German poetical independence, is quite the opposite of

\* Of all the German poets of modern times Lessing's works alone have appeared in a critical and complete edition; Lessing's "Sämtliche Schriften," Berlin (Voss), 1838-1840, in 13 volumes, edited by Lachmann. This edition leaves very little to be supplied. Gottlieb Monike, "Lessingiana," 1843, chiefly refers to his epigrams. Körte, in his Biography of Thaer, went so far as to ascribe Lessing's "Erziehung des Menschen-geschlechts," to that author. The absurdity of the statement has been shown by Guhrauer. Lessing was born at Camenz, January 27, 1729; died, as librarian, at Wolfenbüttel, Feb. 15, 1781.

Klopstock. Klopstock is quiet, mild, and retiring; Lessing uneasy, sharp, taking a keen interest in the world around. Here we have lyric poetry dissolved in tenderness; there prose full of sober sense and cool self-possession; here an easy *laissez aller* disposition; there sharp criticism and excessive scepticism. The one attached to Christianity with child-like faith; the other indifferent to positive religion, and taking up a position hostile to the Church; in the one everything German and Christian; in the other antique and pagan. In Klopstock's poetry the matter mastering the form; in Lessing's, the form holding the matter in rigorous submission. In short, there were antagonistic principles in these two men which it was reserved for Goethe to reconcile. In the matter of his writings Lessing leans decidedly to the antique classic element, much more so than Klopstock, who was the finger-post, so to say, in that direction; while Lessing led off on it. In short, he may be considered as a representative of that contest between Christianity and heathenism which had long been going on secretly in Germany, and which, towards the end of the seventeenth century, came out in its true colours in the tenets of English Deism. Lessing represents that party in Germany who are alway seeking and never finding; who, in fact, prize the pursuit of truth higher than truth itself. Hence, in every instance where he handles the profounder problems of humanity, he is uneasy and polemical; there is always something unsatisfactory and inharmonious.

Shifting about from place to place, now at Leipzig, now at Berlin, now in Breslau, Hamburg, and Wolfen-

büttel, with a number of irons in the fire at the same time, Lessing has laid himself open to the charge of desultoriness and uncertainty of object. Still, there was a vigour and an energy about all he did; a strength of purpose, a straightforwardness, and intelligence in his attacks on the literary faults of the day, that secured his success and demands our admiration. He was the first to throw off the yoke of France, which pressed so heavily on German literature; while he prevented it from being a too slavish imitator of the English. He it was who naturalised in Germany the touch and lucid form of the antique. He assailed the stupid formalism of "that great dunce," Gottsched, as he called him; and criticised the shapeless descriptions in the "Messiah." Lange, and the other unskilful imitators of Horace; his old friend Weisse, who imitated the French; the fables of Hagedorn, Gellert, and Lichtwer; indeed, didactic poetry generally; and lastly, the taste for over-much painting and describing—all these came in for a share of his sarcasm. Like Bodmer, he makes creative, inventive power the first requisite of true poetry; but this power he makes subservient to the strictest rules. In the drama he follows Shakspeare and the Canons of Aristotle.

His principle was not to destroy, but to purify, to improve, to seek for new rules. His "Correspondence about Literature," with Nicolai, from 1759 to 1765; his "Laocoon, or concerning the Boundaries of Painting and Poetry," which appeared in 1766; and the "Hamburgische Dramaturgie" (1768), are his chief critical works. But, besides this, he was, next to Luther,

the father of modern German prose. His style is that of animated dialogue, where one idea naturally produces another; thought follows thought in logical sequence. We are delighted with the playful turns, but we are withal carried away, convinced, overpowered. The conversation is so lively and clear that we almost fancy we are bearing a part in it. Objection and refutation, question and answer, doubt and clearing up of doubt, follow each other in rapid succession, till the subject is thoroughly exhausted; and yet the writer does not dwell upon it a minute longer than is necessary to set the whole clearly before us. There is nothing superfluous in word or thought, nothing for mere ornament, nothing half said; he goes to the pith of the matter, and brings it home to us, and he has done. There must evidently be a great charm in that man's style who can make the most special and out of the way topics in science or art interesting sources of the greatest possible literary enjoyment. No wonder, then, that Lessing's style has, in its peculiar department, been considered a model for the last eighty years or more.

Lessing's youthful epigrams and lyrics are unimportant, although one of the latter, "Gestern, Brüder könnt ihr's glauben," is still remembered. Of his prose fables it need only be remarked that they are written with epigrammatic brevity, and in strict keeping with the subject. It is in his dramas that he develops his powers. Even in his youthful comedies, "Die alte Jungfer," "Der junge Gelehrte," "Der Misogyn," "Die Juden," "Der Schatz," the dialogue is more

lively and natural than all the contemporary efforts in the same line, although the plot does not rise above the ordinary. His tragedy, "Miss Sara Sampson," is of much higher calibre. Here he attempts to introduce the spirit of the English tragedy to the German boards. Hitherto the different personages had pronounced only rhetorical exercises; here they are endued with somewhat more of a natural character. But there still clings, both to this piece and to "Philotas" (1759), some of the sententious, moralising manner that had so long been traditional on the stage. With "Minna von Barnhelm" it is different. "Here," as Goethe says, "we have a glimpse at a higher and grander world than that in which poetry had hitherto moved." The dialogue is lively and rapid, without ornamentation and sententiousness, without being heavy and pathetic. The design is masterly, and the action moves along briskly to the goal. One chief reason why this piece rises above the level of its contemporaries is that it has for its back-ground the grand events of the Seven Years' War; while the life it portrays is not an imaginative, but a real one—the action not confined within the narrow bounds of domestic occurrences and petty embarrassments, but arising out of the great conflict of the nations. So that it may with justice be considered the first German national play, and the model for historical pieces. The effects it wrought were prodigious. All the stiff old tragedies and dramas that encumbered the stage were swept away like so much lumber, and people returned to truth and nature once more. Unfortunately the good fruits that ought to have resulted

were to some extent marred by a crowd of ignorant imitators.

Lessing himself did not pursue any further the path which he had struck out in "Minna von Barnhelm." His "Emilia Galotti," which appeared five years later, exhibits in many respects a striking contrast to the former piece. The subject of "Minna" is quite a model of dramatic interest; "Emilia" is a model of tragic form. In this respect more can be learnt from it than from all the dramas of Schiller. In clearness of exposition it surpasses "Minna." The way in which the events are made to work hand in hand with the action is admirable. The characters are finely and sharply drawn, but without hardness or irregularity. Indeed, in this respect, Lessing excels Goethe in his "Tasso." The language is as precise and curt as possible. By some it has been called epigrammatic,—by Goethe, laconic. In point of material, it served Schiller and his followers as a model of what the Germans call burgher tragedy. The time for making a grand tragedy on the destinies of the nation, and on its national heroes, had passed by without being taken advantage of. In the days of Opitz and Gottsched foreign heroes had been attempted, but in vain. Nothing, therefore, remained but to take as the subject of a tragedy the fate and sufferings of individuals: their conflicts within and without, the destruction of some with their families. Topics, it is true, poor and insignificant as compared with the destinies of nations and heroes, but the only ones left open. Lessing had at an earlier period thought of dramatising the Roman story of "Vir-



ginia," and, in fact, this is the material of "Emilia Galotti."

At the close of his career, Lessing wrote his "Nathan," a piece which, neither in exposition nor in action, approaches the transparency of "Minna" and "Emilia." The language, however, is more simple and lively than in the latter. This piece was meant to be a polemical one (Gervinus calls it materialistic); and this makes its artistic value inferior to that of the two first mentioned. It is written in the Iambics of five feet, which were introduced by J. H. Schlegel and Weisse, and which now became the standing metre for the drama as long as it flourished.

In Klopstock we have seen the Christian poet inspired with the loftiest ideas, the German poet full of ardent patriotism. Again, in Lessing we behold the disciple of the antique, the keen and lucid critic. In Christopher Martin Wieland we have a writer of a totally different stamp. He is neither German nor classical, but French; the advocate of those tastes which the other two opposed heart and soul. He distinctly repudiates the noble and the great. With the sublime he has no concern. Animal enjoyment, sensuality, frivolity, of these he is the apostle. Wieland represents poetically the practical materialism of Voltaire, La Mettrie, Diderot, and the encyclopædists. He advocates the popular philosophy of the sensualist, who considers thorough enjoyment of this life the height of wisdom, and the motto of live and let live—that is, in fact, the most refined egotism—to be the

acme of morality. In a word, he is the German representative of the age of Louis XV.

For the genuine antique he has but little taste ; what he best appreciates in antique life and antique poetry is the period of its decline. The philosophy of Epicurus and Lucian is his model. But these he dresses up in a new costume ; for his Greek (*e. g.* in Agathon) are not Greek, but modern French characters. To him Greece is not a world of the noblest and purest forms, but a world of the most refined gratification of the senses. In the same way the romantic world has only charms for him in its dotage and decline. He loves most the seductive voluptuousness of Boccaccio and Ariosto, the very unideal sensuality of Amadis, the unchastised and almost thoughtless character of the fairy and allegoric poetry of romance, which, however, he only treated ironically. He was, therefore, the very man to suit those who could not endure the Christianity, the sublimity of Klopstock, who were out of all patience with the clear reasoning and rigorous logic of Lessing. He was just the person, too, to suit the higher classes, who had imbibed the subtle poison of France, and to whom thought was inconvenient, ideas troublesome, and enthusiasm an absurdity. It was the interest of the subject matter in Wieland's writings that made them during his lifetime more popular even than those of Klopstock and Lessing. After his death they were soon forgotten. We must also take into the account the fact that he was a good-tempered, worldly-minded man, who tried to make all the friends he could and no enemies ; made a point of never offending

eminent people, and had not mettle enough for an earnest literary controversy. Doubtless, it was owing not a little to him that the succeeding prose and poetry writers emancipated themselves from the stiff and artificial style of the older "learned" period. He helped to check the overstrained sublimity of the Klopstock school. And it is his writings, so free, so natural, so unconstrained, so instinct with cheerfulness and youth, that formed the intermediate step to the still lighter and easier style of Goethe; who, fettered by no foreign rules, writes just as the nature of the subject dictates. But, in spite of all this, Wieland is deficient in almost all the qualities of a genuine classic poet.

And what is the matter of his writings? Modern French voluptuousness and indecency; the insipid philosophy of a Shaftesbury and a Voltaire disguised in Greek forms, as in the "Agathon," "Peregrinus Proteus," and "Aristippus;"—the doctrine of tickling the senses, as in "Musalion oder Philosophie der Grazien," which acquired an inconceivable popularity. Pretty sweet-meats these, to refresh, to nourish, to edify the young generation. Again, in the "Nadine," in "Diana und Endymion," the "Neue Amadis," in that odious "Combabus," on which Wieland so especially plumed himself for having here spoken out certain things in plain German, which people had hitherto supposed could only be enunciated in French; in these and other pieces, the matter is only such garbage as society in a state of thorough effeteness, and of moral, political, and religious dissolution, could possibly take any pleasure in. Nay, even the subject of his

“Oberon,”—which, together with “The Abderites,” is the only good subject he ever handled,—how little of the truly classic spirit does it possess! How arbitrary, artificial, and fantastic; and, then, how flat and common-place! Oberon and Titania the heroes of an epic! How differently Shakspeare introduces them into his “Midsummer Night’s Dream.” Who can feel any interest for such cloud-shapes; such theatrical figures; not the natural creations of the poetic soul, but the misbegotten phantoms of a desultory, unstable imagination. In “Oberon” there is none of the cool, fresh breath of the May morning, but the stifling, oppressive odours of the hot-house. In fine, the *matter* of “Oberon” does not stand a whit higher than that of “Wigamur,” “Lanzelot,” or “Wigalois.” And though, in point of style, the colouring may be clearer and more lively (Goethe’s praise of “Oberon” refers to this), yet those poems have the advantage of being more simple, and in measured versification.

And now to speak more particularly of the form (or treatment) of his writings. In his poetry, as well as in his prose, his pleasant cheerfulness of description frequently degenerates into nerveless softness, his ease into carelessness, his unconstrainedness into irregularity, and his copiousness into garrulity. In his prose the periods are spun out to such a monstrous length that Goethe and Schiller said of him in the “Xenia,” “May the thread of your life be as long as your Prose Periods; where, alas, Lachesis sleeps.” In his poetry he runs riot into all sorts of motley and fantastic metres, where the rhyme is loose and the measure looser.

It is remarkable, that Wieland's mind was quite incapable of handling lyrics.

Many of the phenomena of his writings are to be explained by his personal peculiarities, and outward circumstances. A lad of much precocity, he wrote verses at the age of ten ; while he was brought up in straitened circumstances, and with the greatest strictness. Of a compliant disposition, and easily moulded by external impressions, he outwardly conformed to the religious turn prevailing in his father's house and at the school of Klosterbergen where he was educated, though without any corresponding inward impression. At the age of eighteen he published a poem, "Ueber die Natur der Dinge ;" after which he attached himself intimately to Bodmer, who became the warm friend of the confiding youth, and fostered, or rather forced, his nascent talents. Sitting at one and the same table as Bodmer (so he himself tells us), he imitated, quite in Bodmer's style and manner, an imitation of Klopstock, "Der geprüfte Abraham," and the so-called "Empfindungen eines Christen," a sort of prose psalmody. His outward religious conformity soon led him into religious exaggeration. In his preface to the last-named work, he made a fierce attack on the Poets of Wine and Love, *i. e.* Gleim and Uz. Subsequently, on his becoming connected with the family of Count Stadion, where French culture was the fashion, his religious insincerity at once showed itself. Sick of his feigned Puritanism, he rushed into the opposite extreme, and became a convert to French lightness, frivolity, and indecency. Between 1760 and 1770,

when he held an official situation at his native place, Biberach, his most scandalous effusions appeared. So bad were they, that Hölty, Voss, and Boie (the "Hainbund" as they were called), burnt him in effigy at Göttingen. And so defective were they in form, that the "Alceste" was attacked by the young Goethe in his famous satire, "Götter, Helden, und Wieland." After this he was appointed, as the man of the age, by the Elector of Mayence, to the professorship of literature, at Erfurdt; upon which he turned his attention to modern theories of state, and wrote the "Goldener Spiegel oder die Könige von Scheschian." He then became tutor of the two Princes Kar August and Constantine of Saxe Weimar. Placed in the midst of the noble coterie at Weimar, he laid aside his licentiousness, and wrote "Oberon" and "The Abderites," the latter of which is his most entertaining, if not his best, prose work. Then followed his Græcising Romances, "Peregrinus" and "Aristippus;" after which he took to translating. His letters of Cicero, and the Epistles and Satires of Horace are well known and much read.

Thus, then, we see him all his life open to the impression of the moment; receptive in the extreme, without being able to master, systematise, and assimilate the impressions so acquired. Ever wavering between the dictates of his own good nature and those of French shallow philosophy; between that dreaminess and diffidence so peculiar to the German, and the loosest frivolity, he tried his hand at everything. By those around him he was looked on as the model of a man of the world and as a paragon of learning. True



to the dilettante spirit of the times, he busied himself in everything, and took an interest in nothing. He dabbled in the antique and the modern, in the foreign and domestic, without really knowing any one of them. These qualifications, however, quite fitted him for the editorship of "The German Mercury," which he started in 1773, chiefly in order to make money. This weekly journal of literature and æsthetics was for thirty years the oracle of taste for the middle strata of society.

Gervinus attributes the influence he had upon modern poetry in a great measure to the fact that he raised mere sexual love to a poetical topic. This is quite true as far as narrative poetry is concerned. In this he set the fashion of making love, and love only the theme. But lyric poetry, especially that of Germany, always was of an amatory character long before Wieland. Here a remarkable parallel occurs to our minds. When Wolfram von Eschenbach represented, in his "Parcival," the highest and the noblest aspirations, the greatest struggle that the soul of man has to wage, and the victory it achieved, he encountered a formidable antagonist. This was Gottfried von Strassburg, who, in his "Tristan," propounds and extols another class of ideas, — worldly-mindedness, indifference to all laws human and divine, the empire of sensual desire. The same thing takes place over again in the period we are describing. Put Klopstock for Wolfram, for Gottfried, Wieland. In the one case, we have earnestness and sublimity, nationality and Christianity; in the other, we have cosmopolitan notions, and notions contradictory of Christianity. On the one side, we have

strictness and sobriety; on the other, lively fascination, grace, soft voluptuousness. With this difference, however, that Wieland never describes with the clearness and good taste of "Tristan;" while Wolfram does not, like Klopstock, confine himself exclusively to spiritual topics, but treats of life in the concrete, the world in its reality. Gottfried calls Wolfram an inventor of wild, strange Märe. Wieland, in like manner, says that to him Klopstock is incomprehensible. In their workings, too, the representatives of the two parties in the two ages have something in common. Wolfram never founded a school, properly so called; but all the noble and elevated thoughts of Germany for three hundred years crystallised round him; whereas from Gottfried's poetry proceeded the germs of poetical decay. So, in like manner, a host of noble and grand aims and inspirations, turned upwards towards the poetic ideal, centred round Klopstock; while the adherents of Wieland were men of the lowest ideas; so much so that they filled even him with alarm; while his literary children at last collapsed in a filthy puddle. At the present day, his compositions, with few exceptions, are neither read nor do they admit of being read. Goethe, it is true, in his speech on the poet's memory, passed a very favourable judgment on his writings; but then he was speaking of him as a brother Mason; notwithstanding which the oration will be found in reality to contain the elements of concealed reprobation.

Before proceeding to discuss the second great Triad of poets of this era, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller,

we must revert for a moment to another group of writers which gathered round Gleim at Halberstadt, and which has been called the Halle or Prussian group. The walks they pursued are various. Many of them wrote Anacreontics, and such like compositions, after the manner of Hagedorn, and in turn were imitated by Wieland. They also wrote odes of an earnest nature, like those of Klopstock; while in his endeavours after the strictly antique form, one of them, at all events, follows Lessing. Three of them, Kleist, Gleim, and Rammler, have this peculiarity; that they do not, like Klopstock, sing only the praises of Germany, but of Prussia in particular. Their chief idol was Frederick the Great, who had the gratitude almost to ignore their existence. Some of these poets were students at Halle at the time of the memorable contest between Bodmer and Gottsched, and then formed friendships with each other which continued all their lives.

The chief of this group was Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim, Cathedral Secretary at Halberstadt for the space of five and fifty years. During this long period he was on good terms with, nay, affected the most enthusiastic friendship for, a number of poets utterly dissimilar in character, *e. g.* Lessing and Klopstock, Wieland and Nicolai, Jacobi and Voss. The kind and benevolent way in which he took young men of lesser talent by the hand, and helped them to struggle out of obscurity, was worthy of all credit; but it likewise gained for his poems a popularity which they by no means deserve. Never did any one get the reputation of a poet on cheaper terms

than he did. Most of his verses are mere prosy, pitiful trifles, devoid of ideas. Now, he apes Petrarch, now Anacreon, now the old Minnesingers, in the strangest manner possible, without possessing a spark of their genius. All these amatory and drinking songs are utterly forgotten.

Still louder were the plaudits showered upon his didactic poem, "Halladat." By many it was almost looked upon as a sort of new Revelation, though in fact it owed its origin to the part Gleim took in his friend Boyen's labours on the Koran. Outwardly it has much affinity with Klopstock's poetry, but it is really all interjection and vapid description, with no life or substance about it. Gleim's war-songs concerning the campaigns of 1756 and 1757, which he puts into the mouth of a Prussian grenadier, made a great stir at the time. They bear the impress of the excitement consequent upon the great events then occurring, and are for this reason far the best things Gleim ever wrote; but after all they are not songs for the people. The long descriptions, figurative expressions, mythological learning, exclamations, and what not, exclude them entirely from this category; not but what they served to fan the flame of Prussian patriotism and warlike enthusiasm. Indeed, on the death of Frederick II., "the Prussian Grenadier" was presented with the deceased king's hat as a memento of his services.

One of Gleim's oldest and most intimate friends was Ewald Christian von Kleist, whose memory he mourned all his life long. It was at Gleim's instigation that he cultivated his poetic talents, and in so doing showed

himself vastly superior to his master. His matter is more earnest and dignified, his versification more sustained and measured, than in the loose, prose-like lines of Gleim. He is best known by his poem "Der Frühling," a fragment of a larger and unfinished poem, "Die Landlust." It is true that there is no one great thought pervading this composition; on the contrary, it is a series of pictures succeeding pictures; but the delineations of nature are done with much simplicity, and in a truly poetical spirit. It appeared in 1749, and the reception it met with was enthusiastic. Nor was this undeserved, if we consider that those were days when the old conventional formalism, or Gottsched's precise rhymes all about nothing, or Brockes' pettifogging nature-painting, were the patterns in vogue. After Hagedorn this was the first hearty attempt to get out of the closet into the living realities of fresh breathing nature outside. It is also a very striking characteristic of the tendency of the age to get rid of all traditional, all artificial culture, and withdrawing into the idyllic retirement of the country, to live only in the undisturbed enjoyment of one's own sensations. In point of metrical form, Kleist's "Frühling" is a pendant to the "Messiah," only that he prefixes one syllable to the beginning of the Hexameter, *e. g.* Em-pfangt mich kühlende Schatten, &c.

Among Kleist's followers were Zachariä, the author of "Tageszeiten," which is inferior to the "Frühling;" and the late idyllic poets, such as Geszner. Kleist's other poems are of less mark. Like Gleim he was a great Prussian patriot, and therefore he is placed

here, and not with the elder school of Hagedorn, to which he was nearly allied.

Uz, of Ansbach, was another of this coterie. On the one side he imitated the lively Anacreontics of his friend Gleim, and indeed excelled him in this species of composition. But, on the other side, he wrote serious odes after the manner of Klopstock, *e. g.* the Ode to the Deity, ("Mit sonnenrotem Angesichte flieg ich zur Gottheit auf,") a style of writing, be it said, vastly more in consonance with the earnest and elevated turn of his own mind. Albeit, he was rather inclined to the older didactic style of poetry, still it must be allowed he did a very great deal towards introducing grander subjects, nobler and more natural language, and the antique measure.

After the fierce onslaught made upon him by Wieland, who called him and his friends "vermin," he wrote very little. He was, however, long a favourite of the better part of the German public, and worthily so; for though his light paled before the splendour of Klopstock, still it was pure and pleasant to behold.

Passing over Michaelis, who died young, Klammer Schmidt, Götz, Ephraim Kuh, the Jew, who became insane, with others of this sort, we come to Johann George Jacobi, the elder of the brothers of Pempelfort. Gleim, who was much his senior, conceived for him a romantic friendship, at times verging on the absurd. During this period of toying blandishments, Jacobi wrote nothing of any value. In his pocket-book, the "Iris," however, between 1774—1776, he proved himself to be a capital song-writer. It is true



that he harps a good deal on trifles, and on Idyllic repose; indeed, he never entirely got rid of these tastes of the Gleim school. But Gervinus is much too hard upon him. For instance, if he had never written anything else but "*Die Morgensterne priesen in hohem Jubelton*," this alone ought to rescue him from oblivion. Then, again, his "*Song for Ash Wednesday*," his "*Litany for All-Souls' Day*," his lay of "*The Mother*," are as true, tender, and musical as anything of the kind in German. Nor must we omit to mention his "*Sagt wo sind die Veilchen hin*," so much sung forty or fifty years ago.

The next person of this group whom we shall mention is Anne Louise Karsch. Her history is a remarkable one. Although born in humble circumstances, and subject all her days to poverty and wretchedness; in cold and hunger picking up sticks in the wood; maltreated by her second husband, a drunken, miserable tailor; still this woman, without any literary culture, never lost the poetic faculty of her youth. She would write verses upon the Great King quite as good as those of Gleim and his choir. At times she really produced some poetical ideas of no little merit, but she was not able to put them in shape. We may adduce the touching poem to her deceased uncle, the instructor of her youth, "*Kommt heraufgestiegen aus dem Sande ihr Gebeine die ihr in dem Lande meiner Tugend eure Ruhe habt*;" also, "*Wilhelms Frage bei dem frühen Tode seines Bruders*." In fact, Jacobi's song above cited, "*Die Morgensterne priesen*," was inspired by her "*Wo war ich als dich Morgensterne lobten*." Her

talents were inherited by her daughter, the Baroness Klencke, and her grand-daughter, Madame de Chezy.

The most important personage in this group is Carl Wilhelm Ramler; but he may be considered rather as a connecting link between it and Lessing, on the one hand, and Klopstock on the other. The best of his poems, like his friend Gleim's, turn upon Prussian patriotism; the rest of them are empty and unsubstantial. As a sharp, clear, unsparing critic, he resembles Lessing. In ode-writing, he was the pupil of Klopstock; but eschewing that poet's extravagances, his odes have a finish and precision of form, which make them models in their way. Indeed, the whole modern art of translation from the antique is due to the fine ear and correct perception of Ramler; and but for him, the hexameters of Voss, the trimeters of Solger, and the anapæsts of Platen would have been impossible. It has been remarked that Ramler's imitations of the antique betray too often a stiffness and timidity,—that he is prone to the artificial pedantry of the Opitz school, and too apt to bore the reader with mythological ornamentation. But what is worse still, in his later years, he became so given to filing and polishing, that in this mechanical operation he either forgot or purposely neglected the matter and substance of his poems. In this respect he has, with some justice, been compared to Gottsched. So great was the confidence his friends Lessing and others reposed in his critical acumen, that they subjected their poems to his supervision and correction. Such a mania for altering and revising seized him in consequence, that he slashed and cut whatever

he got hold of in a most merciless manner, without the least regard to the style of the writer, so that it is difficult to say what Ramler wrote and what the author. Among other things, he hit upon the strange fancy of converting Geszner's prose idyls into his own rigorous verse—an undertaking that brought him into great discredit. He also translated the odes of Horace, a work for which at one time no praise was thought too great, but which afterwards was pronounced contemptible by its previous admirers.

There is a perceptible difference between the translations of the fifteen odes which Ramler published in 1769, and the rest, which are of later date. The former are full of the spirit of Horace, with none of that timid accuracy so conspicuous in most of the latter.

This Gleim-Ramler group diverged into two branches; which have continued in a great measure independent of the revolution which the poetical world afterwards underwent. The first of these is represented by Christopher August Tiedge (died March 8, 1841). Connected with Gleim in early days, his smaller lyric pieces have quite the toying playfulness, the insignificance, and the poverty of matter, so characteristic of that writer. In form, however, they exhibit somewhat more finish; but upon examination, this will be found to be little more than empty jingle. His didactic poem "Urania" is more celebrated. In this he sings of immortality in a cloudy dress of sentimental phrase, with the doctrines of Kant before his eye,—principles the very opposite of everything that is poetical. In those days, when it was the fashion to combine dry abstractions and orato-

rical sentimentalities, the "Urania" made quite a furore in certain coteries ; just in the same way as the "Hal-ladat" of Gleim, the master of this school, had made a great sensation in the same circles forty years before.

The other branch of this school is Stägemann, but lately deceased. His lyrics are like Ramler's in their patriotism, their precision of form, and also in the insignificance of their matter. His songs of liberty and those to his wife are deservedly forgotten.

We now turn to the second or greater half of the New Period.

Klopstock's deep and genuine enthusiasm ; Lessing's sharp, clear criticism ; and last, not least, Wieland's reckless exhibition of sensuality, had set all the young spirits of Germany in a ferment. The best of them had arrived at the conviction that the culture hitherto in vogue would no longer do ; that a radical change must be wrought in poetry.

All the poetic forms and materials of the last one hundred and fifty years became the object of a vehement attack. The rising youth of the day stormed and raged against them. Something better they would have, something original ; not what they had been taught and learned. The longing and the struggle to get back to the very foundations of human culture and human society, indicated, as we have seen, by the Deists, by the writers of the Robinsonades, by Montesquieu and Rousseau, with their novel doctrines about government and society ; by Klopstock, with his primæval German heroism ;—it was this desire which

manifested itself, though in another shape, among all the greatest spirits of Germany about the year 1770. The impulse was sudden and universal. It was the same impulse which in France, twenty-two years later, without undergoing that wholesome intellectual process it had gone through in Germany, threw itself with wild violence upon every existing institution, and upset society, church and state, while straining after an impossible ideal. The whole nation was seized by an uncontrollable desire to get rid of all its traditional culture, to return to a state of aboriginal nature. But in Germany the process was an intellectual one, thoroughly worked out in the mind of the nation. The revolution they wrought was in the domain of intellect; they sighed and sought for a regeneration of the poetic gifts and powers of the nation, and this object was accomplished.

The period of this poetic revolution, also called "the Storm and Impulse Period," after Klinger's drama, "Die Sturm- und Drang-Periode," commenced with the appearance of Herder, in 1797, includes Herder, Basedow, Goethe, Lavater, Lenz, Klinger, Müller, and the Stolbergs, and ended with Schiller, in 1781. However different these were in talent and mode of thinking, they all agreed in this, that there was something darkly hovering in the depths of their soul, to which they longed to give a voice and an existence; that the ideas within them were original, were diametrically opposed to anything hitherto known, and owed their parentage to them and nobody else. They felt that they were born to be the regenerators of the intellectual

world, to promulgate a new poetical revolution, drawn from the primæval poetry of the nations. But these were only the aspirations of young poetical geniuses, full of power and activity. Hitherto there was no fruit, and the crop might be blasted by vanity, by premature prodigality of their gifts, by the numerous other dangers to which these ardent spirits were exposed. In fact, some of them fell a prey to the wayward eccentricities they indulged in, or were consumed in the flickering, unsteady flame of their own genius. Still, in spite of all their perverseness, their vagaries, their fancies, one and the same watchword served for the whole mass. They must recur to popular poetry, with Shakspeare and Homer for their models. These were the words of power that dissolved now and for ever the crumbling fabric of three centuries, "learned poetry." Strange as it may sound, it is nevertheless literally true, that though Homer had been read and re-read, and noted upon, and translated, for three hundred years, the Germans were essentially ignorant of its meaning. It was now that they first entered into the spirit of the Greek poet; and no sooner was this done than they at once learned also to comprehend their own old national poetry, and thence to appreciate the national poetry of the cognate races of Europe. The lesson had been a laborious one, but it was at length mastered, and its mastery is due to the energetic, uneasy spirits of the said Storm and Impulse Period.

But we must now individualise the writers who solved the problem, and proclaimed the solution to their countrymen. As poetical producers, Hamann



and his pupil Herder are comparatively of no great account; their merit is that they spoke first, and spoke effectually—"This is the way, walk ye in it." This we know to be true of Hamann, if from nothing else, from Goethe's express statement to this effect.

Hamann urged a return to the simplicity of the most ancient poetry—to the childhood of the peoples, and their child-like faith, as the true basis for the renovation of poetry. He urged it, not with the reasoning of a logical understanding, but with the full energy of his character. He pointed to the Old Testament as containing the elements of the oldest and most perfect poetry—as the source of that natural power, that freshness and simplicity necessary for the production of grand poetry. Poetry he showed to be an unsearchable mystery, not a business of the market-place, a mechanical craft to be plied in public. He it was who first became conscious, and taught others the same, that everything great in this world is not effected by the understanding, or by the sensations, or by prudence, but by the whole heart and soul and body—all the human powers working in unison. He did not arrive at this conclusion from investigation, but by instinct, by his own immediate conviction. It was part and parcel of his natural character. He was branded, in consequence, by the spokesmen of the day as an abstruse dreamer, and even Gervinus has joined in the cry against him. Doubtless, many defects may be discovered in his style. It is anything but beautiful—full of sibylline sentences, incomprehensible allusions, obscure expressions, sudden jumps. But, as

aforesaid, we do not profess to weigh his merits as a poet, but only as one who animated his contemporaries to better things.

In the same manner we must look upon Johann Gottfried Herder, not in the light of a creator, but of a pioneer in a better path, as one who awakened the national consciousness, elevated the people's aspirations. In this, his influence was incalculable. His was the innate faculty, fostered in a great measure by the study of Shakspeare and Homer, of throwing himself into the noblest parts of the inner life of all nations; of bringing these foreign elements home to the heart of others. He was a universalist in the highest sense. If the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had tried to comprehend the Greeks and the Romans, if the next succeeding period had endeavoured to appreciate and import from France and the Netherlands, from Italy and England, it was in Herder that these endeavours first saw their end and accomplishment. Nay he went much further. It was from him and him only, that Germany learned to study and comprehend all the other nations of the earth, the Arab, the Persian, the Hindú, the Malay, the Chinese, the red men of America, with their language, their genius, their customs and poetry, their love and hate, to sympathise with their secret joys and sorrows. He it was who paved the way to an historical and comparative study of language.

This universalism of Herder's stamped its classic character on the literature of this period, clothing the best materials in the noblest and most appropriate forms. He finished what Klopstock and Lessing

began; wedded the genius of Germany to the genius of foreign nations; took foreign matter and clothed it in German forms, and vice versâ.

In 1767 appeared his "Fragmenten zur deutschen Literatur," and in 1768 his "Kritische Wälder." In this last publication he first disclosed the essence of Homer, and made it comprehensible to his countrymen. Being a clergyman, he next turned to a study which must have been congenial to him, that of the poetry of Revelation, and brought out his "Aelteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts," a subject which he pursued in several other treatises, *e. g.* in his "Vom Geiste der Ebraischen Poesie." In these he regards the Old Testament as a sublime and original creation, chiefly, however, of the human mind. From that time forward, at all events, the old notion was exploded,—the notion inculcated by the English and French deists,—that the Old Testament was a mass of tasteless fables, the product of a rude, undeveloped race of men. One injurious consequence, however, of Herder's view was, that the maxim came into vogue of measuring Revelation according to the world, instead of the world according to Revelation.

Another important work of Herder's is his "Von deutscher Art und Kunst." Here he restores the oldest national songs to their poetic rights as the source and standard of all poetry, and vindicates them from the aspersions that had been thrown upon them. As the nation had before learnt what an epos was from his disquisitions on Homer, so from these disquisitions they first were able to comprehend the nature of lyric

popular poetry as opposed to the poetry of art. The ideas he here broached were further taken up and more accurately defined and developed by the brothers Grimm, and the Romantic school.

But Herder was something more than a literary reformer. He also exercised a healing influence on society. By restoring the people's poetry to its legitimate place, he raised the condition of the people also. The common man could not now be looked down upon as one of the rude, stupid rabble. It was impossible, henceforth, for the higher classes to claim poetry and letters as their exclusive privilege. The intellectual life of the masses asserted for itself a due share of importance. And this put an effectual check on the mock enlightenment of the day, which thought the best thing for the people was to rob them of every natural characteristic, all their intellectual inheritance, and stuff them with the odds and ends of a spurious culture. No wonder, then, that Herder was hated alike by the old intellectual oligarchies and by the new and shallow illuminati. Schlözer said "he was one of that new race of theologians, those gallant, witty gentlemen, who are equally fond of dogmas and street ballads." Nicolai also attacked him in "Kleyner feyner Almanach von Volksliedern." This elicited, in 1788, Herder's "Stimmen der Völker in Liedern;" a collection of ballads of all nations; most of which, however, had undergone a good deal of transformation in his hands; the German ones the least. He had conceived the idea of such a work as far back as 1773. It was the first collection of the kind; although some popular

songs had appeared separately in Jacobi's "Iris," and other publications.

With no less eagerness Herder turned his attention to legendary lore and its delicate creations, so long sealed up to the people. His observations on this species of literature, and the valuable light thrown by it on the customs of past times, are excellent. As an original poet, Herder does not shine. His best poetical compositions are imitations and translations of popular songs. In these, however, we discover that wonderful power he possessed, of throwing his own spirit into foreign creations, of adapting his own mind and language to the thoughts and sensations of others. Next to these stand his legends; the defect of which is that they are too didactic. His last work was a version of the "Cid" which did not appear till after his decease. It cannot be denied that in these Spanish romances, he has omitted some of the best parts. Occasionally, too, he has departed from the spirit of the original, and given his version a softness not to be found in his Spanish prototype, and incompatible with the old heroic poem. Still there is evidence enough that he was a poetical genius of a high order; and his "Cid" must always rank among the best poetic creations of Germany.

His other imitations and translations, *e. g.* the Greek Epigrams, the Odes of Horace, and of more recent Latin poets, the tales from the Greek mythology, all exemplify his uncommon aptness for accommodating himself to the minds of others without forfeiting his own individuality; while at the same time they have

not the flexibility and ease of the popular songs, nor the music of the "Cid."

As for his entirely original poems, *e. g.* the secular lyrics, one can hardly imagine they are written by the same Herder; they are so dogmatical, dry, and insipid. His Christian and Church hymns are equally infelicitous. We can understand why Klopstock failed to catch the popular tone of the true church hymn. He did not live among the people, but in the transcendental atmosphere of his own exclusive sensations. But this was not the case with Herder. He it was that had first awakened the attention of his countrymen to popular life and its claims. The only way therefore to explain the artificiality, the design, and esoteric nature, so to say, of his church hymns is, by saying that the sense for what was popular was only just awaking, and it was not to be expected that *all* the popular elements of poetry should at once be conceived and thoroughly appreciated.

His prose, especially that of his earlier works, resembles Lessing's. In his "Kritische Wälder" he evidently imitates him. There is the same flexibility, the same endeavour, and with no less success, to be dialectical; but he wants the classic repose and transparency of Lessing. Some of his works are in dithyrambic vein; high-flown and Klopstockian, *e. g.* "Die älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts;" and in a less degree, the treatise on the "Spirit of Hebrew Poetry," and the "Philosophy of the History of Mankind."

His best prose is unquestionably that written in imitation of Lessing; but there is not that enduring



interest in it that belongs to the prose of Lessing. The reason is, that there is a something spasmodic and unequal in Herder, very different from the calmness of Lessing. With a tinge of Hamann's whimsicality, which in Herder becomes humour, he is at one moment off to the remotest regions of his universal knowledge, and in the next back to the narrow limits of his own individuality—letting us see the grand whole, which he has to show us, only through the prism of his own thoughts, sensations, and feelings. Again, he is full of fits and starts, scintillations and flashes—a conceit which has been much affected by the later German humorists, of whom, in fact, he may be called the intellectual father. With Herder's scientific activity—his relation to the philosophy of Kant—his theological correspondence, which was of much importance when he wrote it—with his historical works, *e. g.* “*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*,” his most celebrated work, but which has been long superseded—we have no concern here, any more than with the minutiae of his life. Suffice it to say that he could agree with nobody but Wieland. He was accused of priestly pride, of arrogance, censoriousness, and hyper-criticism. But, whatever his faults, this much at least is true, that he was the Atlas of the new poetical world of Germany.\*

\* Herder was born August 25th, 1744, at Morungen, in East Prussia, in indigent circumstances. The difficulties he had to contend with in raising himself to independence were even greater than those encountered by Klopstock and Lessing; and the struggle accounts for many peculiarities of his character. In 1765 he became teacher at the Cathedral School at Riga. Subsequently he travelled, part of the time, as

## GOETHE.

There was no one upon whom Herder exercised a greater influence than Johann Wolfgang Goethe. It will be impossible, however, in a work like this, to give a complete history of this greatest of the modern German poets. Indeed, the time has not yet come for forming a thorough and complete estimate of his character and writings. The reader must be content with some hasty outlines instead of an elaborate picture. Goethe's first poetical period precedes the year 1775, when he became attached to the Court of Weimar, and corresponds exactly with the "Storm and Impulse Period."

Goethe himself has related how, when he was residing at Strasburg, he was drawn by Herder, his senior only by five years, but greatly his superior in point of sureness and clearness of views and in knowledge, into the intellectual struggle then raging among the young and ardent spirits of the day. Goethe was the very poet that Herder had imagined, but could not himself embody—the genius who, by the force of his own natural powers, went to life and the realities of the world around for the matter of his inspiration, moulding these into poetical shape—who spoke to the heart from the heart, and uttered what was to be in everybody's mouth. He threw off the trammels with which

companion to a Prince of Holstein. From 1770 to 1775 he was Court Preacher at Bückeberg; from 1776, Court Preacher and General Superintendent at Weimar, where he died, 18th December, 1803. The last collective edition of his works is Cotta's, 1827–1830, in 60 volumes.

his predecessors in poetry were bound—its rules of art, its traditional models. The genius of reality was henceforward to be in the ascendant. Even Klopstock, as we have seen, was mastered by his material. It was reserved for the resolution and energy of the young Goethe to show how the poet could master his matter. What he sang he had felt and experienced; it was his own heart's property. Unlike the matter of contemporary poems, the matter of his was pure, and sound, and tranquil, bearing none of the impress of individual circumstances—of the uneasy fretfulness of the moment, of passion and inward struggle. His truth and warmth of feeling, together with that clear, profound calm of soul—the free and unfettered movement of his poetry—the great facility with which he suffers himself to be absorbed by the topic, or absorbs it into himself, alternately objective and subjective, at will—all this was natural to Goethe, and goes to form the elements of his poetical greatness. The other poets of his time, not excepting Klopstock, tried to be something; Goethe was what he was without effort. His earliest lyric productions are so true, so warm, so hearty and touching; they betoken such inward certainty and firmness, that nothing but the old Volkslied can be compared with them. The latter, doubtless, to some extent served as his model of imitation, *e. g.* in his “Heiden-röslein,” “Der König in Thule,” “Das Lied eines gefangenen Grafen,” &c. We will only further mention his “Glück und Traum,” “Stirbt der Fuchs so gilt der Balg,” “Sehnsucht,” “Nachtgesang,” the poems to Lilli or Belinde, the “Trost in Thränen,” the last of

which is one of the best lyrics in any language. All these poems relate his own experiences, his own love-stories, yet there is no unruly passion in them—no troubled fermentation of feeling struggling vainly for expression, or, if it hits on the right expression, only doing so by chance. The fermentation is over; we have nought but the golden wine, sparkling and fragrant. No cries of passion or disquiet break in to disturb the melodious sounds, which, like happy spirits, hover lightly over the tumult and the troubles of the world.

In all these poems we trace a heartfelt feeling for nature. The various seasons, with their blossoms and their falling leaves, their heats and their storms, are here. They form, however, not the fore-ground, but the back-ground of the picture. There is no excessive scene-painting. There is not a line in the poem where we don't feel the life and the truth of nature without her being obtruded upon us in due form, and described in full. The feelings, too, are not shadowy and unsteady, based upon nothing,—not mere fleeting paroxysms; they appear with firm outline, in clear and delicate colours. The action, moreover, is true, and in the most natural sequence. This sublime repose, this plastic grandeur, is most conspicuous in those pieces which are inspired from a keen perception of the antique mythus, *e. g.* in “Grenzen der Menschheit,” “Prometheus,” “Gesang der Geister über den Wassern,” “An Schwager Kronos,” “Ganymed,” &c.

What has been said of Goethe's early lyrics applies, some of it even with greater force, to his “Götz von

Berlichingen," and the "Leiden Werthers." The former rose out of the intimate acquaintance which he made with Shakspeare's works at the instance of Herder. The matter of this drama is derived from an early period of German popular life, and the whole is shaped in the Shakspearian spirit, but with none of the slavish imitation so common then and since. Perhaps there is no other work of Goethe's that so well exemplifies his power of living over again the time that is past, of absorbing himself entirely into the subject. It was quite by chance that he had taken up the book of the Franconian knight, which, of all the literary products of the sixteenth century is one of the most dull and unreadable; and with his extraordinary power of assimilation, he managed to take in the life and spirit of those days, and out of the whole evolve a drama, which, for historic truth, poetic freshness, for its popular touches and delicacy, nowhere finds a parallel. We are here transplanted, as if by magic, into the very life, the ideas, the circumstances of those days. The obscure Franconian knight assumes, in our eyes, a shape and proportions pretty nearly such as those with which the people of the twelfth and thirteenth century invested the popular hero, Duke Ernest. It was no ideal of ancient days that Goethe sought to place before his readers; but real flesh and blood people just as they were, with their earnestness and folly, their love and hatred. The actors in the great national movement of the sixteenth century rise up before us, and show us of what stuff they were made. They don't think, and feel, and talk, but act. And that is the

reason why the Germans, in reading "Götz," could almost fancy they were reading a bit of their own youthful history. In Götz, and those around him, they could recognise themselves and their dear old forefathers; and rejoiced in their presence just as the people of earlier centuries rejoiced in the presence of the old kings and heroes of the popular epic. Such a work as this is truer than all historical expositions. Indeed, it is not too much to affirm, that whatever real knowledge the public acquired of the sixteenth century, they got from "Götz von Berlichingen." In the selection of the hero of his piece Goethe evinced consummate tact. He is not one of the leading persons of the days of the Reformation. A far greater effect is produced by keeping those historical personages in the back-ground.

Again, the matter of the piece bears a strong affinity to the state of Germany at the time when it was written. There the sturdy barons and chivalry of the empire are engaged in a stout conflict with the new political order of things and its modern innovations. Here Goethe and the original geniuses of the day were fighting the battle of progress against the cramped and bigoted traditions of an antiquated culture.

This is the only thing "revolutionary" about the work; an epithet with which it has been unjustly stigmatised by Gervinus and others.

The sole point in the piece worthy of reprehension is, that Goethe assigns an undue prominence—a little too much after the modern taste—to Adelheit. In the original sketch of the play this fault was even more conspicuous. The conclusion of the piece and death of



Götz are likewise open to criticism. No wonder that this play, gushing, as it did, from the wells of fervid patriotism, excited the ire of the Frenchified Frederick II., who pronounced it an “imitation détestable des mauvaises pièces anglaises,” and full of dégoûtantes platitudes. Indeed, those who admired it mistook its purport; for it stimulated the taste for wretched plays and romances of chivalry.

One year later, and in the twenty-fifth year of his age, Goethe wrote his “Werther.” The matter of this work is open to grave poetical objections. It describes the sentimentality of the day, which had been stimulated by the writings of Klopstock, and still more by “Ossian,” then so fashionable in Germany. It describes the malady of the day, but not the cure. Goethe, as he himself informs us, was a victim to this disease, which consists in a complete prostration of the moral and physical faculties, in a painfully passive state; during which the sufferer is the sport of all sorts of whims, humours, fancies, and feelings. Nay, these are his very meat and drink; he luxuriates in tears. So exquisitely sensitive is he, that the least contact with the external world is death to him. He shrinks from his fellow-men and their affairs, as the disturbers of his inward world with its sweet sensations and dreams. Inanimate nature, on the other hand, is his consuming passion. The dumb animals, too, how intensely he loves them; they are his only true friends; they will sympathise, but not meddle, with his heart’s bitterness and joy. Life, alas! has no charms, no hopes, for him; he longs for death, and die he does. This malady—which was

the inevitable conclusion of that passion for a primitive state of nature, and that antipathy for all the traditions of civilisation, action, knowledge, and belief—prevailed in Germany from the year 1765 till about the time of the French Revolution, and swallowed up some of the best of the nation's powers, physical and intellectual. Among several grades of society it continued till the time of the war of freedom, when Germany at last got rid of it. As aforesaid, Goethe caught the infection, but his sound and vigorous mind at last triumphed over the complaint, and the fruit of this victory is "Werther." With the completion of the work, so he himself tells us, he entirely recovered. This is the key, then, to that most lively and truthful description of the youth living for himself and in himself: with his intense passion for nature, his melancholy, his intellectual coma, his self-tormentings, his waverings between resisting and giving way to his morbid feelings, his final despondency and death. The poet experienced all this, except the last. But we must not look on this book as merely sentimentality in the rough, with its wild mass of distracting feelings, its excruciating discontents and despondency. It is the poetry of the thing that we have before us. Goethe has come out of the fierce ordeal; from his distant eminence the poet calmly surveys the scene, and from his individual experiences, he generalises into universal truths, feelings felt by all. But the world did not look upon the work from this poetical, and, indeed, only admissible, point of view. They regarded "Werther" as an apology for sentimentality, an apology for suicide; and, consequently,

it promoted the very disease it was meant to cure: the disease of which Goethe had cured himself. The "Werther-fever" became an epidemic. Lotte and Werther, in print and portrait, were disseminated all over Germany; nay, throughout Europe; even as far as China. Every syllable of the tale was believed to be true, and so everybody tried to fix the characters on some real individuals. Those who lived in the neighbourhood of Lotte's abode were aware of the intense interest and curiosity felt for her. English travellers even now visit a mound of earth, called "Werther's grave," which has been heaped up by a speculative innkeeper at Wetzlar.

Of Goethe's other juvenile productions, his "Laune des Verliebten," and his "Mitschuldigen," are mere studies, interesting only as contributions to the history of his mind. They belong to the old school, not to the new Goethe; but they exemplify his peculiarity of ridding himself of the unpleasant influence of actual life by means of poetic shapes.

"Clavigo" is a great descent from "Götz," — Merk coarsely stigmatised it as "ein Quark" (trifle); — and "Stella" from "Werther."

His "Pater Brey" is a capital satire on that class of men who "make hill and valley all alike, and smear everything over with lime and gypsum;" those egotistic levellers who are always meddling; and without the faintest notion of the meaning of things, desire to square them according to their own standard. This class of individuals is again sketched in Mittler, a character in the "Wahlverwandtschaften."

One could hardly believe that this piece, "Pater Brey," so sharply and smoothly written, was originally a purely personal satire on Leuchsenring, the Jesuit-hunter: Merk is the Grocer, and Balandrino and Leonore, Herder and his bride.

In like manner, the "Satyros" is an almost prophetic sketch of the revolutionary propagandists and professing regenerators of the age, though it probably, in the first instance, is a hit at Basedow. So the "Jahrmarkt zu Plundersweilen" is a lively picture of the narrow-mindedness of a small market-town. The satire on D. Bahrdrf of Giessen, and his modernisation of Christianity, is famous; as also that on Wieland's pitiful description of Greek heroes in the "Alceste." All these pieces are in Hans Sachs's form, and show what a poetical genius can effect even with obsolete forms. By these imitations, and the excellent poem, "Hans Sachsens poetische Sendung," he brought the worthy old poet into notice. Some fragments of similar pieces of his have lately been published. Of all the poetical schemes of this period, none were ever realised but "Faust," which stuck by him for sixty years. Guided by a true instinct, he relinquished his "Prometheus," "Mahomet," and the "Wandering Jew."

On commencing his residence and official duties at Weimar, Goethe's poetic progress became impeded. For nearly ten years he published nothing of note. Many people imagined then, and do so now, that this life of business and the court stunted and nipped the fresh sprouts of his genius, thus disappointing the hopes raised by his early productions. But the practical ac-

tivity of actual life was an indispensable necessity of his existence; and while thus occupied, he was bracing himself for new efforts. This much, however, is true, that by his intercourse with the Court of Weimar he ceased to be a popular poet. It is also true that, for a continuance, the place did not afford him enough scope for intellectual activity, or material for poetry. Impressed with this conviction, he tore himself from it, and took his journey to Italy, in order, by enlarging his sphere of observation, and by studying the treasures of plastic art, to give more precision to his hand in mass and form, and a wider scope to his thoughts. It may be that he had other reasons for this journey; but, at all events, it had the very best effects on him as a poet.

His Italian journey brought about the completion of his "Iphigenie," "Egmont," "Tasso," "Claudine," and "Faust"—the latter still as a fragment, but a fragment that embraced a world.

The first sketch of the "Iphigenie," which has been recently published among his works, was in prose. In Italy he metamorphosed it into iambics of five feet. In this drama he solves the problem of that day—how to embody in a German form the spirit of antiquity,—how to amalgamate them, so that they suit exactly the one to the other. The deep, majestic repose of the *dramatis personæ*, in spite of all their inward emotions, the grand simplicity of the action and the language, the pellucidness of the whole—all this is in the thoroughly antique spirit; it is not an imitation, however, but a reproduction. At the same time there is a simplicity and sincerity (*Geist der Innigkeit*) about the whole,

and a gentle breath of peace (*e. g.* at the conclusion), that are essentially German. Of real action there is little. This defect, in fact, has often been imputed to the German drama. But here, to use Schiller's words, we have thought in action; so that this very defect may stand not only as a warning, but a model of imitation, — first, to those who think the essence of the drama consists in a hurried succession of incidents, in action heaped upon action; and secondly, to those who, neglecting action, run riot in rhetorical exposition. Here they both can learn, as Schiller says, "to make thought, action," (*Gesinnung zur Handlung machen.*) For the rest, it may be observed that "Iphigenie" is no national drama like "Götz;" but this is only a proof of the versatility of the poet's powers.

"Tasso," which was also originally in prose, and was converted into a poetic shape under a southern sky, lies open, in a still greater degree, to the objection of want of action. But this is in some measure compensated by the exceeding delicacy and clearness, the firmness and precision with which the characters are drawn. The dialogue at the beginning of the piece between the Princess and Eleonore, with its delicate adumbrations, which almost look undesigned, of the whole course of the drama, is a great artistic treat. The initiated will discover something more than meets the eye. The man who can, from a feature or a word, unriddle a character and draw auguries of its future conflict with the world, has something here to muse upon with delight. Hardly any work is more calculated to put one out of conceit with common-place



romances than "Tasso." One may return to it again and again. In one respect it resembles "Werther." It describes the poet's own experiences,—his own circumstances; but here he has emancipated himself from them, and they assume a clear and independent shape.

"Egmont" did not, like "Iphigenie" and "Tasso," first pass through the alembic of prose. There are inequalities in it, and a perceptible lack of completeness and finish, *e. g.* in the condemnation and execution scenes. It may be pronounced more a series of studies than one complete work of art. There is not enough tragical grandeur about the hero. Schiller says the historic hero was greater than the dramatic one. The cream of the piece are the favourite scenes with Clärchen, which are the oldest, and are also derived from the poet's personal experiences.

In 1831, Goethe finished his sixty-five years' poetical career, by producing that long-nourished conception of his, "Faust." As early as 1773 it was written down much the same in matter as when it, "as a fragment," appeared in 1790, although the critical knife and file had been vigorously used to his earlier designs of it. Little was added to the matter of it after his Italian journey. The most important addition is the "Hexenküche," written at Rome in the Garden Borghese. But in the year 1808 "Faust" appeared as a tragedy. In this edition he has added Faust's soliloquy, which is followed by the Easter scene, the first conversation and agreement between Faust and Mephistopheles, the death of Valentin, and lastly, all that now stands in the piece, from the Walpurgis night to

the end. The fragment of 1790 ended with the scene in the Minster. The idea lying at the bottom of this saga of Dr. Faust of the sixteenth century is a highly poetical one. It is the inextinguishable thirst of man for a degree of knowledge surpassing all the lengths and depths of human understanding; the straining after powers and enjoyments which he must be content to dispense with in this prison of flesh. Even in the old saga we have the Titanic nature of man rising out of the dark profound, storming upwards to the very gates of Heaven, and perishing fearfully in the attempt. It is, in fact, the Psychological side of the old fable of the "Titans."

The period when Goethe composed "Faust" laboured under similar symptoms. Men yearned to know what had never yet come within the sphere of human knowledge; to penetrate even into the supernatural, exactly as in the days of the historical "Faust." They were sick of traditional science and "grey theory;" they strove to clutch the golden fruit on the green tree of life. Independent inquiry; nothing else would satisfy them; they sought for something, they knew not what; they wandered restlessly onward without a guide, and not knowing whither they went; with no clear or certain aim they rushed into the infinite; the calm satisfaction of fruition had no charms for them; in the wanton exuberance of youthful strength they would take nothing for granted; they would acknowledge nothing that they had not felt and done, and experienced themselves. Such was the spirit of the days on which Goethe had fallen, and it is reflected in

“Faust.” We must not, however, look at this drama from this historic point of view only ; otherwise it is a mere picture of that particular time. But it is more than this ; it is a picture of the world. Into this category the poet exalted it from the very first. It became still more so by the addition of the “Prologue in Heaven,” and most of all by the very latest additions above mentioned. In the second part, however, it sinks from the grandeur of an universal world-picture into the narrower confines of a picture of the time.

Faust represents not an individual, but man ; man in the independent exercise of his powers, endeavouring in the energy of his soul and his will to transcend “the flaming bounds of time and space,” to take the universe by storm ; man, too, in all the contradictions of his nature, in his power and weakness, in his certainty and doubt, in truth and error, knowledge and ignorance.

Faust will not rest till he has sounded all the depths and recesses of hidden wisdom, till he has collected all the knowledge that mankind has been garnering up these thousands of years ; and lo, he has got what he lusted for ; and what is it after all ? He has the picture, but not the reality ; not living nature, but dust and ashes, the skeleton of dead knowledge ; not such wisdom as has bubbled up from the fresh fountain of life, and which in its turn spreads abroad rills of living water to refresh the plains of his own existence.

To know is not to do, it is not enjoyment ; then and then only can his desires be satisfied when his knowledge becomes deed, and every deed enjoyment. In-

deed, he cannot know anything really till he has tried it, and experienced it himself. And, therefore, since he has tried life, and it brings him no satisfaction, he will try death, and that by his own hand. At this moment, when he is on the point of taking the final step, the clear tones of the Easter hymn sound in his ears, "Christ has risen!" At that sound his heart is again restored to unity with itself, as in the days of his boyhood. He can again enjoy the cheerful simplicity of that existence, with its days of work and of merry-making, when he lived contented in his burgher home. But he is again invaded by new doubts. Those simple enjoyments now pall upon his sense. He can no longer lay hold on those great words of Revelation which but now brought comfort to his soul. After that brief elevation he falls all the deeper. He is drawn into the circle of sensual pleasures; he will drink deep of insatiable delights; his capacity for enjoyment shall have no limit. He has done with knowledge; he will *experience*, not only joy, properly so called, but bitter delight and sweet despair; in his simple self he will enjoy everything that falls to the lot of universal humanity. And so he plunges into the whirlpool of most complete enjoyment, as aforetime he had plunged into the stream of knowledge, that he may taste of all human joy and all human woe, and be himself all in all. And so he soars up to the highest summits of human pleasure (Gretchen), and down to its foulest abysses (Journey to the Brocken and Walpurgis night); destroys his own enjoyment, destroys the enjoyment and the life of others, and would like to come to a stand-still in his joys and

griefs, but dare not, cannot. The true-hearted maiden is devoted to one joy, one grief only ; but Faust has no heart for that ; he must on to others,—must make the whole round. Well may she exclaim, in hollow tones, “ Henry, you make me shudder ! ” Gretchen will go no further ; she halts in the midst of her immeasurable woe, and therefore she is “ saved ; ” but Faust is borne onward. “ Hither to me ! ” is the last cry of the Demon.

While in the first part of “ Faust,” the symbolical and typical figures embrace a world ; in the second, the robe of allegory is far too thin and scanty. There is also much that is enigmatical in it, which it is vain to seek to unriddle ; indeed, it is perhaps not at all worth the while to attempt to do so.

In “ Hermann and Dorothea,” Goethe has most admirably solved the difficult problem of the possibility of constructing a “ Burgher Epic,” a poem that is, which, in the purest epic style, recounts the transactions of domestic middle-class life of the present day.

As in the genuine epic, the poet’s own personality is here kept entirely out of sight. He discards all rhetoric as a means of working upon the feelings. He uses description merely as the framework, employing the action alone in its full purity and simplicity to produce the effect required. At the same time, with true epic tact, he permits us to have occasional glimpses at a back-ground of great events ; and, in this respect, the poem differ from Voss’s idyl, “ Luise,” from which he took the first idea. Some, who looked upon “ Luise ” as the beau ideal of domestic life-painting, have pro-

nounced the "Hermann and Dorothea" an unworthy imitation of it. This poem was composed by Goethe at a time when he was in most lively intercourse with Schiller, an intimacy by which, as he himself affirms, he was stimulated and encouraged to further production. But Schiller exercised no direct influence upon the composition. Indeed, in this poem, Goethe adhered to his old rule of never taking anybody into his confidence, about what he had in hand, until it was completed.

Not so in the case of "Wilhelm Meister," which was the result of a long discussion between him and Schiller, during which he made many alterations in the original plan. The first six books were written as early as 1785, before the poet's journey to Italy; but it was not completed till just before he began "Hermann and Dorothea." It has been allowed on all sides, that this work is very unequal; and the beginning and ending in no respect tally. There are here many true and lively pictures of life, the result of the author's own experience, and there is no little epic freedom about it. But there is also in it a good deal of unpoetic reality, not to say much that is revolting to the moral sense. But the reader puts up with this in the expectation of finally arriving at the truth, that a man cannot become a great artist from the world around him, unless he be born an artist; unless he can, through this innate power, draw the world outside into himself, assimilate it, and spiritually reproduce it. But instead of this, the action is dissolved in a cloud of mystery and dogmatising; or, in plain English, the magniloquent promises of the commencement end in smoke.



The "Wahlverwandtschaften" (Elective Affinities) surpasses "Wilhelm Meister" in artistic finish. Like "Werther," which was written thirty-six years earlier, it describes a psychological disease of the modern world; but without suggesting, or even wishing to suggest, any remedy. Nay, strangely enough, submission to duty is here disease, and yielding to the sensations, health! The very title of the work, which applies a chemical principle to the moral world, announces a description of the way in which the higher will of human nature is bound to the lower powers of nature. The immoral tendency of this work is apparent. But it has this one merit: it gives a true history of an inward malady, without any gloss or concealment. The poison is plain to see, its deadly effects are apparent, but it is not permitted to come nigh us. It is secured in a crystal flask of matchless workmanship, made by the poet's own hand. The description, in fact, has been executed with consummate skill. The characters are like so many statues, so clearly are they outlined. The circumstances are drawn with delicacy and precision. The contrast between internal disquiet and the peacefulness of external nature is most cleverly managed.

Goethe's biographies, which he commenced soon after the "Wahlverwandtschaften," and continued to his death, have all the excellencies and none of the faults of that work. There is no gloomy struggle here of antagonistic principles; we have before us a life sound to the core. In "Wahrheit and Dichtung" ("Truth and Fiction"), as well as in the "Italian Journey" and

the "Campaign in France," there is nothing fictitious or strained. The clear pellucid stream rolls onward,—now and then receiving a turbid brook mayhap, which it soon clarifies, and reflecting all the varieties of landscape through which it passes. Ever and anon we hear a hollow sound, betokening that it is passing through some rocky defile; but before long it has issued forth again, and a light eddy or circle of foam dancing gaily onward, is the only evidence of the struggle that has been encountered in the depths below. There is assuredly not a line in this work that is merely imaginative. The term "Dichtung," rather arises from the fact that the author has omitted many minor details, *e. g.* in reference to the real names and circumstances of his Gretchen, Friederike, and Lilli, which after all were best omitted.\*

\* The interest felt by the public for Goethe went into ridiculous extremes. It was considered a great gain by some to have discovered that his great-grandfather was a shoe-smith, and his grandfather a tailor, and afterwards landlord of the "Weidenhof," at Frankfort. The least inkling about his love affairs was an object of ardent pursuit. Gretchen was the daughter of an innkeeper, at the sign of the "Rose," in Offenbach, according to Bettina, who had it from the "Frau Rath." Friederike was Friederike Brion, of Sesenheim; died November, 1813, at Meissenheim, in Baden. Lilli was Elizabeth Schönnemann, afterwards married to Von Turkheim. See the unpleasant gossip in Näke, "Wallfahrt nach Sesenheim," 1840; Pfeiffer, "Goethe's Friederike," 1841; A. Stöber, "Der Dichter Lenz und Friederike von Sesenheim," 1842. These books indicate about the same amount of good sense as do the people who go staring at Goethe's house, in the Hirschgraben, at Frankfort, although it is now entirely modernised, instead of visiting those ancient parts of the city which are as they were, and which were mixed up with the childish sports and dreams of the youthful poet. Again, the correspondence of Goethe with Schiller, Zelter, and others, is only interesting in a literary point of view; whereas the few letters exchanged

The dramas written by Goethe expressly for the stage, *e. g.* "Die Laune des Verliebten," "Die Mitschuldigen," "Clavigo," "Die Aufgeregten," "Gross-Cophtha," and others, are inferior to his more ideal ones, "Götz" and "Faust." The two operas, "Erwin und Elmire" and "Claudine von Villabella," the latter of which first appeared in J. G. Jacobi's "Iris," in 1775, were, like "Iphigenie" and "Tasso," rewritten in Italy, and to this they owe their brilliancy and freshness.

The "Natürliche Tochter," was based upon the memoirs of the Princess Stephanie of Bourbon Conti. Schiller's dramatic activity stimulated Goethe to write it. Originally it was intended for one of a Trilogy, setting forth the moving ideas of the French Revolution. This plan, however, was not carried out. The subject was not a favourite one with the poet, and the characters are not drawn with his habitual felicity.

Passing by his numberless unfinished compositions, *e. g.* "Nausikaa," "Der Achilleis," &c., we will refer for a moment to his oriental studies, the occupation of his extreme old age. At that period the War of Liberty was being fought, and Goethe has been severely censured for taking so little interest in it. It may be alleged in his defence that he felt incapacitated,

with Madame Stein and the Countess Auguste Stolberg do open a deeper insight into his character. The correspondence, however, with F. H. Jacobi deserves notice; and that with Charlotte Buff, and her husband, Kestner, published in 1855, shows that the connexion between the three was not only nobler, but more poetical than his account of it in Werther's Leiden. Goethe was born at Frankfort on the Maine, 28th August, 1749, and died at Weimar, 22d March, 1832. See Lewis' Life of Goethe.

physically and mentally, from entering the lists to any purpose; so, as a refuge from the storms around him, he retreated into the domain of oriental poetry. And here we have only a fresh proof of his versatile powers.

Goethe, in mind as well as body, always gives one the idea of perfect health. His whole being is free from strain, over-excitement, or violence. He never, as he says, "rushed after some indistinct ideal, but let his feelings gradually develope themselves into capacities." The fruits he bore were not artificially forced; the stream of his poetry was not the result of hard pumping from the Pierian spring, but the spontaneous effusion of his genius. At times it rested—presently, however, to gush forth again with fresh and living energy. To his healthy open eye the things and persons of this world showed themselves in their true, simple, and natural shape,—not distorted or magnified by a haze of delusive fancies. He fully comprehended objects in their most hidden essence. It was this faculty of apprehending things, and making them, so to say, his own, that is meant when the Germans talk of Goethe's "objectivity." It is this which lends to his poems such life and freshness,—to his prose style such calm grace, such an equable flow; which renders his periods so clear and pellucid.

Another result of this natural soundness of understanding was, that he never suffered himself to be overcome and mastered by the subject in hand. With instinctive tact he avoided, as subjects of composition or thought, matters which he felt to be beyond his grasp and reach. He used to say that there were

“certain lines of fortification to a man’s existence,”—bounds, as it were, which he could not pass, beyond which his powers availed not. No poet could estimate more exactly than he did the extent to which these powers reached in his own case.

Again, Goethe was no book-worm—no writer of the closet; but a man of life and of the world. Sitting brooding and dreaming alone was contrary to his nature. It was in the intercourse with his fellow-men, in practical activity, in seeing and enjoying the objects of the world around him, that he obtained his inspirations. This it was that sent him to Italy. Again, in respect to his studies of nature, which have so often been ridiculed, how fortunate the man who, when anything occurs to cross him, can withdraw from the turmoil of the crowd—fly to the mountain solitudes, there to “hold converse with Nature’s charms, and see her stores unrolled.” This was one way, in fact, which he took to keep up the freshness and freedom of his thoughts. It is the poet of man and his doings taking his recreation, and relaxing for a while the tension of his mind.

But there were some things which Goethe could not do. He could not comprehend the philosophy of the time. He had no taste for music. But what is most remarkable is, that, though he could fathom all the heights and depths of man’s nature—could understand all the emotions of the soul, and put them in poetical shape, he never could bring the movements of the nations, the life of the people in the mass, into harmony with himself. With regard to the French Revo-

lution, for instance, though he was dissatisfied with it, he never could make up his mind how to regard it; in short, he could not see his way clearly through it.

Schiller\*, who was ten years Goethe's junior, and wrote his first works at the close of the "Sturm and Drang" period, imbibed many of its peculiar characteristics, both in his life and in his poems. Hence comes that tendency of his to the ideal,—that tendency to struggle against the restrictions of society, and of circumstances generally,—that proneness, not so much to throw realities into a poetic form, as to throw his ideas into realities,—that love of lively description and strong oratorical colouring. And it is owing to this that he has become a greater favourite with the Germans even than Goethe, and especially with those of them who sympathise with his choice of subjects and way of thinking.

His first piece, "Die Räuber," or, as he proposed calling it originally, "Der verlorene Sohn," was projected before he reached his twentieth year, but was not printed till 1781, when he was two and twenty. Here we clearly see represented the line he took and always adhered to. In spite of its many

\* Schiller was born on the 11th (it was formerly said the 10th) November, 1739, at Marbach, near Stuttgart, and died at Weimar, 9th May, 1805. His biography, by his sister-in-law, Caroline von Wolzogen (2 vols., 1830), is agreeable, but not by any means complete. The most complete, but most one-sided, account of him, is that by K. Hoffmeister ("Schiller's Leben, Geistesentwicklung und Werke," 4 vols.). The most compendious and trustworthy is that by Gustav Schwab. Compare his correspondence with Goethe, with Dalberg, Humboldt, and Körner. The latter is ponderous and minute; and while it does not enhance Schiller's reputation as a poet, it lowers it as a man. See Carlyle's "Life of Schiller."



faults,—its rudeness of design, its crudeness and improbability, its forced language, and its straining after effect,—it indicates a decided dramatic talent on the part of the writer. The action is brisk, and there is a tone of real feeling pervading the piece. It is an attempt to assert poetically the prevailing ideas of the period. That there might be no mistake about it, the vignette of a rampant lion was prefixed, with the motto, “in tyrannos.” We have here vice opposed to vice, sin to sin. The poet attacks the “coward meanness” of those in high places—the skulking poisonous malice that works in secret; and the weapon he uses is the violent destruction of social and political order. This is the punishment he would apply. The former vice is incurable; not so the second. The piece was received with immense applause, owing partly to its subjective truth, more perhaps to its pathological interest.

The “Verschwörung des Fiesco” represents, even more nakedly and decisively than “The Robbers,” the republican ideas then so rife; but it exhibits much less truth of feeling and liveliness of action. The language, too, is a great deal less natural; nay, its bombast reminds us of Lohenstein. “Fiesco” is a political tragedy, a subject for which Schiller’s youth, imperfect education, and want of experience in these matters, evidently unfitted him. In such hands the portraits are liable to lapse into caricatures, or shadowy outlines. One advantage “Fiesco” possesses over “The Robbers” is, that the characters are historic, and not such shapeless monstrosities as occur in that piece. But these bare republican figures had much less charm for

the German public than the wild indefinite shadows of "The Robbers." And "Fiesco," much to the poet's surprise and sorrow, was received very coldly by the public.

"Luise Millerin," or to use Iffland's name, "Kabale und Liebe," which was adopted by Schiller, goes a step further into actual life than "The Robbers" and "Fiesco." The basis of "The Robbers" may be said to be everywhere and nowhere. The scene of "Fiesco" is laid in an actual Republican State; but in "Kabale und Liebe" we have a most graphic presentment of the ideas then entertained, whether favourable or otherwise, about the Frenchified, frivolous, or debased world of the Court. All conceivable abominations are transferred into this exalted region; and on the other side we have the burgher world oppressed, despised, ill-used. Between these two opposites a struggle ensues, which makes our moral feelings revolt against the former class; not, however, that the artist had any distinct consciousness of the object he had in view. "Kabale und Liebe" suggests, in fact, impossibilities. Such enormous rascality, such so-called generosity of soul, are more than human. The whole is a caricature, odious alike in a moral and an æsthetical point of view. At one time the German public thought otherwise. For many years this piece was a most decided favourite on the boards.

The poet now begins to emerge from the region of indefinite aims, uncertain aspirations, and ill-directed powers. His youthful productions, though they faithfully mirror forth the mental ferment then working in

educated minds, and give us an insight into the secret struggles a great poet has to undergo, are not interesting as works of art. In his next drama, "Don Carlos," we see him entering into another phase. Brighter and clearer objects are opening to his view. It is true that in the original draught of the first three acts, which were printed in the "Thalia" in 1785, we find him still possessed with that passionate interest for the vulgar ideas of the age. There Don Carlos is evidently the poet's favourite character, engaged as he is in the conflict with the authority of his royal father. But two years had elapsed, and "a change now came over the spirit of his dream," and, as the poet himself informs us, Carlos ceased to be his favourite, and Posa took his place. This explains why the fourth and fifth acts were written in an entirely different spirit. The length of the piece, we may observe parenthetically, unfitted it for the stage, for which the poet intended all his dramas, and the first three acts were consequently much curtailed. It was the poet's original design to give a family picture of a princely house, to describe the domestic troubles that Philip II. brought about by his despotism. This idea, in fact, is kept in view through the first three acts. But now Posa is introduced; and we have liberty arrayed against despotism, cosmopolitan ideas against state-craft, the republic against the monarchy; this, however, more in speech and thought than in action. It is a mistake to suppose that Schiller meant to represent Posa as the ideal of friendship, and his death as a martyrdom in that cause. The poet himself took great pains to con-

tradict this opinion. But after all, was it not a very natural one, considering that the world of that time was full of Klopstock and Gleim's "friendship-phantasies" above alluded to.

With all this changing, the drama suffered not a little in an æsthetical point of view. The exposition is confused and crowded, the action hurried, and the characters vague and wavering. Still the march of the poet's ideas since he wrote "The Robbers" must not be overlooked. In "The Robbers" it was only crime blindly battling with crime; in "Fiesco," reckless, murderous republicanism; in "Cabal and Love," burgher magnanimity opposed to the worthlessness of those in power, while in "Don Carlos" we see cosmopolitan magnanimity face to face with the iron will of the despot and rigid state-forms. In short, in Schiller's dramas we have the French Revolution in an inverted order. His dramas end with what the French Revolution began. The Convention, with its keen scent for anything like kindred sympathies, recognised in the German dramatist one after their own heart, and decreed to "Mr. Gillés" the honour of French citizenship. But the decree did not reach the new *citoyen* till long after the chief act of the bloody tragedy at Paris had been played out.

What greatly contributed to clear and tranquillise the poet's once turbid spirit, was the study of history and philosophy, to which Schiller began to devote himself in 1787, and still more his intimacy with Goethe, which began in 1794. Historian or philosopher, in the strict sense of the word, he was not, neither did he

pretend to be. His intimacy with Goethe, which woke the bard of Weimar from the poetic lethargy into which he had been thrown by his dissatisfaction at the French Revolution, had the incalculable advantage for Schiller, that henceforward he learnt how to master and arrange his subjects. To this period belong, not only Schiller's best lyric pieces, but also his great tragedies. The oldest and grandest of these is his Trilogy of "Wallenstein," completed in 1799. The subject is the happiest he ever chose. Greatness in its decline; a greatness standing forward in bold relief amidst the fierce ferment of the times; a greatness historically great, and not needing any invention, but only a poetic shape; a national personage who gained the contemporary sympathy of both the hostile parties; a sympathy which was still existing in tradition. But it is not alone in the choice of the subject that Schiller shines, but also in the lifelike and artistic method of execution. At the same time the character of Wallenstein is in some measure allied to those of Moor, Fiesco, and Posa;—to use the poet's own words, "He is a man of violent nature, struggling and wrestling for the great objects of mankind, dominion and liberty." As "The Robbers," "Fiesco," and "Carlos," were the prophetic counterparts of the French Revolution; so, as Gervinus has well remarked, Wallenstein was the prototype of Napoleon. From Schiller's correspondence with Goethe, we see what pains he took in carrying out the work; how he strove to grasp his subject in all the fulness of its historic reality. Here, in fact, he was Goethe's pupil; so strikingly so, that until Goethe denied that he

had any hand in it (with the exception of two lines), people fancied that the first part of "Wallenstein's Lager" was his. In one point Schiller decidedly failed. It is universally allowed that the part of the play of "Wallenstein" which he liked best, and which most pleased the public, is a mistake, and interferes with the effect of the drama. We mean the episode of Max and Thekla. There is also one other defect; Wallenstein fell by his own fault, and not through the overwhelming weight of circumstances, as Schiller supposes him to fall, which considerably lessens our tragic sympathy for the hero.

His two next dramas, "Maria Stuart," and "Die Jungfrau von Orleans," earned almost more applause with the public than "Wallenstein;" though in artistic value they are below it. The former possessed the materials for a genuine historic drama. But there is so much sentimentality, such a preponderance of the touching and rhetorical in it, that the historic almost falls into the background. We have moving scenes, but no powerful deeds; painful sufferings, but no violent struggles. Schiller tells us that he was sick of heroes, and longed to describe human sufferings, for which he could feel a human sympathy. But this was the very rock on which he had split in his four earlier dramas.

The same may be said of his "Jungfrau von Orleans," to which he gave the additional title of a "Romantic Tragedy." One of the gravest defects of this piece is that the maiden's religious enthusiasm is little more than



mere phrase; and another—which naturally arose from the first—that Joanna, in her struggle between heavenly enthusiasm and earthly love, succumbs to the latter; whereas it was very easy to have supposed her imprisonment and death brought about by the seductions of worldly honour to the neglect of her original mission from Heaven. Gervinus says she looks like a somnambulist, and the stricture is true. It is to this fundamental mistake that we owe the numerous others, *e. g.*, the exceedingly feeble scene with Montgomery; the wonderful explanation between her and Duke Philip of Burgundy; her sudden affection for Lionel, which is so baldly described; and the tumultuary close of the piece, which is merely put in for effect.

The “*Braut von Messina*” gave the signal for the appearance of a quantity of “*Tragedies of Fate*,” by Werner, Müllner, Grillparzer, and others.

Without any mythological background to support it, this drama rests on a dark decree of fate, to which innocent and guilty alike, the former first, fall victims. In the Greek legend of the “*Labdacidæ*,” fate and crime go hand in hand, and flow into one, and if the innocent do fall, their destruction is not connected with destiny, but with the crimes of the guilty; whereas here, crime retires into the shade before fate, and in the later *Fate-Tragedies* it is utterly lost sight of. Schiller justified his introduction of the chorus in this play; but this was owing partly to his utter ignorance of the antique Tragedy. In the “*Bride of Messina*,” the chorus are the retainers of the two brothers, and can,

therefore, hardly represent that impartiality and unbiassed opinion which fell within the province of the ancient chorus.

On the other hand, in this play of Schiller's, language unfolds its utmost brilliancy and magnificence. It was impossible to go further consistently with good taste; so that all the efforts made to surpass him have as surely indicated a commencing decay, as did the similar attempts made in the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries.

To "Wilhelm Tell" most critics have assigned the preeminence over all Schiller's dramas. It has been said that, in its economy and exposition, it surpasses "Wallenstein;" in its dramatic motives, the "Maid of Orleans," "Maria Stuart," and the "Bride of Messina;" and all of them in the way in which the ideas are worked out.

Nevertheless it has its defects. The murder of Geszler in the hollow way is improbable, and not in harmony with the piece. The scenes of rustic life, too, are artificial. The introduction of the parricide and the Brothers of Mercy is quite out of place.

Still it must be confessed that the idea, which is obscured by passion in "The Robbers," "Fiesco," "Cabal and Love," and which becomes purer in "Don Carlos," is here artistically worked out and purged of all passion and prejudice on the part of the poet; and in this respect, therefore, "Tell" is, always excepting "Wallenstein," the most perfect of Schiller's dramas.

We shall now devote a few words to Schiller as a lyric and didactic poet. In his lyric, as in his dramatic

poems, two, or rather three, periods are clearly traceable. In all his poems, the earliest as well as the latest, there is the same liveliness of description, the same clangour and brilliancy of language, the same strength and depth of feeling. But in the oldest, written between 1780 and 1782, we perceive a passionate excitability, just like that shown in "The Robbers,"—aimless overflowings of the feelings and fancy, the most vigorous and frequently the most successful touches of word-painting. We can distinctly hear the wail of the individual sounding even through the noise of "die Schlacht" (the battle). It is the cry of a soul dashing against its prison bars—struggling to get out it knows not whither. Owing to all this, there is no doubt a superabundance of phraseology in these early poems. Still, they will not fail of making an impression, if we can only manage to transport ourselves into the writer's individual position and feelings. It is not without reason that "Hector's Abschied," "Amalie" (in the Robbers), "Minna," and "Die Kindermörderin," have become so popular with the young. The exceeding passion of these poems has no doubt been their chief recommendation. Few young men can have read, without being carried as it were aloft on eagle's wings, his poem of "Die der schaffende Geist einst aus dem Chaos schlug; durch die Schwebende Welt flieg ich des Windes Flug."

His second period commences with his "Song to Joy," ("Freude.") The poet's soul was now brighter, calmer, and more self-possessed. At the same time, however, this poem, which is dedicated to an abstrac-

tion, marks the poet's entrance into a reflective and philosophising phase. The fine language and ringing verse hardly make up for the want of real matter. The same may be affirmed of two other poems, written at this time: "Resignation," and "Die Götter Griechenlands." The former begins with the motto of every heart that longed for the simple charms of nature, "Et in Arcadia ego," (I too was born in Arcadia.) But it immediately passes from this tone of soft sadness into one of cold, comfortless philosophy. The "Gods of Greece," beyond question, shows that the poet has done with the Christian world, and consequently merits the attack made upon it by Friedrich Stolberg. "Die Künstler" was at one time more famous than now; more famous, indeed, than it deserved. It is interesting as throwing light on the history of his poetical culture.

To the period when Schiller worked in common with Goethe, we owe his most imperishable lyric poems. We allude to his Ballads and Romances, which were composed at the same time as his finest dramas, to which they are manifestly allied. "Der Ring des Polycrates," "Die Kraniche des Ibicus," "Der Taucher," "Der Gang nach dem Eisenhammer," "Der Handschuh," "Ritter Toggenburg," "Die Bürgschaft," and "Der Kampf mit dem Drachen," are coeval with "Wallenstein." His "Hero und Leander," "Kassandra," "Sehnsucht," "Der Pilgrim," and "Der Jüngling am Bache," are coeval with "Maria Stuart," the "Maid of Orleans," and the "Bride of Messina;" while the "Graf von Habsburg," the "Berglied," and "Alpenjäger,"

are contemporaneous, in point of composition, with "William Tell."

In spite of imperfections in many of these poems, there is nothing comparable to them in the German language, except Goethe's "Bride of Corinth." The pure epic diction, the modulated tones of expression, the almost faultless composition, the unflagging interest preserved throughout, the dignity of the subjects, and noble bearing of the whole, must strike every reader. Of the same date as "Wallenstein," are the "Lied von der Glocke," and a number of other poems; the merit of which is sufficiently attested by Goethe's simple epilogue. But the choicest flowers of Schiller's poetry are unquestionably the four following poems: "Der Spaziergang;" "Das Glück;" "Der Genius," and another, originally called "Das Reich der Schatten," afterwards "Das Reich der Formen," and finally "Das Ideal und das Leben." In action, strictly so called, these poems may be deficient, but they contain another sort of action, the immediate revelation of the innermost secrets of the poetical genius.

Goethe used to say, with much self-complacency, "People ought not to dispute whether he or Schiller was the greatest, but rather rejoice that there were two such fellows in existence." The dispute he refers to commenced among the disciples of the Romantic School. Novalis inveighed against the deficiency in moral power discernible in Goethe's poems, and his fondness for describing bad company and bad men. Others, *e. g.* Müllner, Börne, and Menzel, took up the

cry, and pronounced Goethe to be a preacher of immorality, of quietism, and what not; and, in fact, an anti-national poet. W. Schlegel, on the contrary, with other chiefs of the Romantic School, took exception to Schiller. His descriptions were devoid of truth, said they,—his figures, of reality; while others went further, and called him a mere poet of phrases; till at last Riemer, of Weimar, discovered that all the good in Schiller, he had filched from his friend Goethe.

Without entering into any lengthy comparison of the two poets\*, we may say that the grand distinction between them is this. It was Goethe's wont to rise from particulars to generals; Schiller's to descend from generals to particulars. Goethe starts from real life and its particularities, and raises it into poetic forms; Schiller strives to impart to his general ideas, reality, life, and substance.

In short, in the two individuals we see embodied, so to say, the ancient contrast between the poetry of nature and the poetry of art. And each was great in his own line.

We may here remark that, wrongly or rightly, the rising youth of Germany have made up their minds that Goethe is the poet of servitude, and Schiller of liberty.

On the position held by these two poets in reference to Christianity, there has been much diversity of

\* The twin monument lately erected at Weimar is very characteristic of the two poets. Goethe receives with a proud consciousness of his powers the offered laurel crown: Schiller seems to wave it away with his hand; his thoughts, like his eyes, are turned aloft to something nobler still.—*Editor.*



opinion. Some have stigmatised Goethe and Schiller as mere heathens; their love of poetry an anti-christian worship of genius. Others again have ransacked their works for every possible passage or phrase containing the faintest whisper of Christianity, and have marshalled these together for the purpose of proving that both poets were Christians, or at all events Schiller. Others again, who are opposed to anything like historical, or at least ecclesiastical Christianity, cite Goethe and Schiller as their authorities in this matter; though they acknowledge them both to be believers in a universal religion, viz., God, virtue, and immortality.

It cannot, indeed, be denied that both poets were in discord with Christianity. Goethe took the Pantheistic point of view, or that which deifies Nature; Schiller the rationalistic, or that which deifies man. Many passages in the writings of both poets, especially Schiller, indicate a hostile attitude towards Christianity. The preface to "The Robbers" may seem to betoken a different feeling, but this was merely a forced concession on the poet's part. He was glozing over his real feelings. And if other passages may be found written in a spirit more friendly to Christianity, they only serve to convince us that the two poets could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion on the matter in their own minds.

Vilmar endeavours, however, to show, that in spite of those storms that ruffled the surface, there was still underneath, in the depth of these two poets' minds, a serenity and calm. But we shall not follow him further in his arguments; merely adding, that he considers

Schelling and Hegel, Humboldt, Savigny, and Grimm, to be in reality thinkers in Goethe's spirit.

A short survey will now be given of the separate groups and schools of poets which concentrated themselves round Klopstock, Lessing, Wieland, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller.

In the wake of Klopstock we have a number of biblical poets, old Bodmer at their head, and, in his early youth, Wieland. Most of their productions are feeble imitations of Klopstock's "Messiah," and have fallen into merited oblivion. Lavater, it is true, caught somewhat of Klopstock's lyric mood. But most of his pieces are mere echoes of Klopstock, fervent and feeling it is true, but mostly shapeless, and thoroughly rhetorical; at times exaggerated and untrue. For a composer of Church hymns, Lavater's mind was too uneasy and too little imbued with ecclesiastical tradition. He was better adapted by nature for writing religious poems; but he marred his efforts by too hasty productions. Many of these contain only one poetic thought wrapped up and choked in such a mass of words, that he had occasionally to append to them explanatory notes. His oldest and most important compositions are his "Schweizerlieder."

Intellectually allied with Lavater was Johann Heinrich Jung.\* His romances, "Florentin von Fahlen-

\* This was the name he assumed in his autobiography. Heinrich Stilling, commonly called Jung-Stilling, was born at the village of Grund, near Hilchenbach, in the Principality of Nassau-Siegen, 12th September, 1740, and died at Heidelberg, 2nd April, 1817.

dorn" and "Theodore von der Linden," are long since forgotten; and the same fate will, perhaps, overtake his "Heimweh" and "Siegesgeschichte." But this will never be the case with Heinrich Stilling's "Jugend, Jünglingsjahre und Wanderschaft." Here there is a simplicity of description, a truth and depth of feeling, and what is more, a truth and depth of Christian experience, such as is scarcely to be found in any other work of German literature. The first part of his autobiography, in which he had the assistance of his friend Goethe, is the most poetically complete. The character of old Eberhard Stilling is drawn in a masterly manner. The two next parts are very valuable as a history of the purification of the inner life. Indeed all these three parts are full of poetic freshness, and go to the hearts of all. In the fourth part, containing a history of Heinrich Stilling's domestic life, the interest begins to flag; although the account of the death of his wife is very touching and real. The fifth part, describing his life at Marburg, is unimportant.

The German elements of Klopstock's poetry inspired a mass of so-called bards. The chief of these is Karl Friedrich Kretschmann, who styled himself "Rhingulf the Bard." He wrote two poems, "Die Hermannsschlacht," and "Herrmann's Tod," (called after Klopstock Bardiete,) and abounding with hollow phrases and violent expressions. He also composed a bardic poem on Kleist's grave. Kretschmann was at one time a great favourite, so much so, that people said that "with the exception of Klopstock and Denis, he was the only

person who had caught the real Bardic one ;” \* whatever this may happen to mean.

Denis, a Jesuit of Vienna, the self-styled “Sined the Bard,” first translated “Ossian ;” and then wrote Bardic songs in the style of Ossian and Klopstock combined. Like Kretschmann’s poems, these are long since forgotten. “Prose run mad,” is the way they are described by Kästner. His ode on the death of Gellert was longest remembered. Quite a host of “Bards” followed the lead of these notables, and to them we owe the proverbial “Barden-gebrüll,” (“Bel-lowings of the Bards.”)

One of these was Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg, who died 1823. His “Song of a Scald,” written in 1766, does contain some real Northern mythology. He also wrote dramas in the style and spirit of Klopstock. His long-famous tragedy, “Ugolino,” (after Dante,) is crammed full of horrors. It is downright Lohenstenian bombast ; only in the language of Klopstock. His cantata, “Ariadne auf Naxos,” written in 1767, was acted times beyond number. The line, “Down, down from the rocks,” used to set people in a shudder of delight, and dissolve them in floods of sweetly-bitter tears. In his earlier poems, Gerstenberg shows much of the Anacreontic vein of Hagedorn and Gleim, and even of Wieland.

One of the most popular poets of his day, partly for his poems’ sake, partly on account of his misfortunes,

\* This criticism is from Jördens’ “Lexicon deutscher Dichter und Prosaisten,” 1808, vol. iii. p. 106. The “Bards” were forerunners, and, in part, contemporaries of the “Genius period.” They did not last long, viz. from about 1765 to 1775.

was Christoph Daniel Friedrich Schubart. He used to wander about Wurtemberg, and made a great sensation wherever he came by giving "readings" of Klopstock's "Messiah." He also adopted that poet's "patriotic" ideas, and, together with Weckherlin, promulgated them in so indiscreet a manner that he was imprisoned. His best poem is "Auf, auf, ihr Brüder und seid stark," which is unaccountably wanting in the last edition of his works. He also affected Klopstock's pathos of expression, though in a somewhat coarser tone; and it was this that made him such a favourite with the middle and lower ranks of society.

At one time every lad in Germany could repeat by heart his "Vatermörder." The lines "Hugh, Hugh, a bone, and yet another bone," and "See'st thou blood upon the wall," used to make their blood run delightfully cold. Again, that tissue of phrases, "Die Fürstengruft," was even more famous. Many of these songs were sung by the burghers and peasants of Wurtemberg. Schubart also wrote a number of most lascivious pieces in the tone and style of Wieland. These he afterwards suppressed. As a youth he was very profligate, but his ten years' confinement at Hohen-Asberg sobered him completely. He wrote henceforth nothing but religious poems, overflowing with feeling and passion, but of no poetic value. Most of his compositions are now forgotten.\*

\* Schubart was born 20th March, 1739, at Obersontheim, in Wurtemberg, and died, 1794, at Stuttgart. He wrote in the "Genius Period," and he may be looked on as a sort of South-German representative of that kind of poetry. His confinement at Hohen Asberg lasted from 1777 to 1787. He published his autobiography, 1791-1792.

Another class of writers are the poets of Nature, who represented the softer elements of Klopstock's poetry, his sadness and sensibility. Foremost among these stands Geszner, the Idyllic poet. His descriptions of Nature were long considered to be the *ne plus ultra* in that line. Indeed there is much that is good and true in them. But the accompanying delineations of human sensibilities are as soft as butter and nauseously sweet. The crown of his poetic prose are "Der erste Schiffer" and "Der Tod Abels;" the latter intolerably luscious, and withal meagre. The "Fischeridyllen" of Xaver Bronner, once a monk, are of better quality.\*

The poems of Friedrich Matthison were at one time in as high favour as the idyls of Geszner, and Schiller even had a high opinion of them. They were first brought into discredit by the Romantic School. He describes natural scenes with striking reality. "Das Mondscheingemälde," and "Der Abend," are models in this line.†

Johann Gaudenz de Salis-Seewis is, like Matthison, a delineator of Nature; he is no less real, but possesses greater power, and stands higher, because he connects his descriptions of Nature with human feelings. One of his most celebrated poems is "Das Grab ist tief und stille," but it is not one of his best.‡

\* Salomo Geszner was born, 1730, at Zurich, and died, 1787, a bookseller, and member of the Council. Franz Xaver Bronner, a writer of kindred mind, was born at Danauwert, in 1758. He was originally a Capuchin monk, but quitted the order, and died at Aarau, at the age of ninety-two, on the 12th August, 1850.

† See A. W. Schlegel's estimate of his poems, in the treatise, "Matthison, Voss und Schmidt," &c.—Works, xii. 55.

‡ Salis was born at Seewis, in the Grisons, 1762; died at Malans, 28th January, 1834. During the time in which he wrote poetry, he was



The Göttingen Poetical Confederacy, "Dichterbund," or "Hainbund," as it was called, next claims our attention. Among its members and adherents were Bürger, Hölty, the two Counts Stolberg, Johann Heinrich Voss, Miller, Leisewitz, Claudius, and Göckingk. Nearly all of these belonged to the "Genius Period," as it was called. Under the ægis of Klopstock they strove to make the poetry of Shakspeare and the Greeks the model of a new era, rejecting everything that was feeble, obsolete, untrue, and un-German; Wieland, consequently, they especially eschewed. This confederacy only lasted from the autumn of 1772 to the autumn of 1774, while these young men were at the University; but the effects it produced were considerable. It did not regenerate poetry it is true, but it helped to disseminate the good seed first cast by Klopstock. Their organ was the Göttingen "Musenalmanach," which also contained papers by Klopstock and Goethe.\*

Captain of the Swiss Guard at Versailles. His contemporary, Matthiesson, was born, 1761, at Hohendodeleben, near Magdeburg, and died 1831. His poetical period was brief. What he wrote after 1796 is hardly worth mentioning.

\* The "Dichterbund" of Göttingen flourished in the "Genius Period," and at the time when Goethe first made his appearance. Hardly one of its members wrote into the nineteenth century. Even Voss had ceased to write in 1802, when he made a collection of his poems. See Prutz, "Der Göttinger Dichterbund," 1841. The "Musenalmanach" was founded in 1770, by Gotter and Boje. The numbers of the first nine years are an important contribution to the history of poetry. Bürger was born 1st January, 1748, and died 8th June, 1794. Hölty was also born 1748, and died 1st September, 1776. Friedrich Leopold Count Stolberg was born 1750, and died 1819. Voss was born 1751; died 1826. Müller was born 1750; died, at Ulm, 1814. He only wrote

Gottfried August Bürger did not, strictly speaking, form one of this society, as he left the University earlier; indeed, in many respects he is quite distinct from them. Many of his poems bear the true impress of his own life, which was most unsettled; in fact, the number of good poems that he wrote is small. His "Ritter Karl von Eichenhorst," or his "Knapp saddle mir mein Dänenross," how unnaturally strained these are! How inflated his "Lenardo und Blandine;" how high-flown "Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenhain;" how trivial "Die Entführung der Europa;" how common his "Frau Schnips;" how impure some of the elements of his "Dörfchen," an imitation of the "Hameau" of Bernard. But even in these feeble affairs we behold an ease of description, a flexibility of narration, and, above all, a harmony of language and flow of verse which remind us at times of the lays of the Minnesingers. It was this very facility and felicitousness of versification that led him to be so careless about the subject. When he does light by chance on a good topic, his great powers are seen to their fullest advantage. Nearly all his pieces demonstrate natural aptitude for writing in a popular tone, which he had improved by the study of Percy's "Relics" and the compositions of Herder. There is a ringing music about his "Lenore," which even Schiller never excelled, and a popular tone of expression only surpassed

till 1785. Boje, who was more of a critic and littérateur, was born 1744, and died 1806. He gave up the publication of the "Almanach" in 1776. To those mentioned in the text may be added Christian Adolf Overbeck, the Burgermaster of Lubeck, born 1755; died, 1821. He wrote songs for children and domestic poetry.

by Goethe.\* Excellent also are "Das Lied vom braven Mann," "Robert," "Das Lied von Treue," and "Der Kaiser und der Abt." His sonnets are the best in the language, although they are among the eldest of the modern era. That "An das Herz," which was written in the days of his deepest misery, is the most noteworthy. No German poet was ever more popular than him. His "Lenore" passed instantaneously through the length and breadth of the land, and is to this day in the mouths of gentle and simple. Five-and-twenty years after his death his third wife, Elise Bürger, strolled about the country declaiming his poems with great pathos, although she had mainly been the cause of his early death.

Hölty, who died so young, the poet of tender feelings, sweet dreams, and sad foreboding, obtained a similar kind of popularity with Bürger. All his poems give the impression of a pure juvenile genius, prematurely blooming and withering. The desire, then so universal in Germany, for the simple, undisturbed enjoyment of nature, for the repose of the country, was never expressed more purely and tenderly than by Hölty. Nobody has painted melancholy with more reality. His "Traumbilder," in the manner of Klopstock, and addressed to his future mistress, were among his best known and best liked productions. "Der alte Landmann an seinen Sohn, Ueb immer Treu und Redlichkeit," is also well known. His Romances are of no great importance.

\* An excellent account of Lenore, and of all this coterie of poets, is given by Wackernagel, in Haupt and Hoffmann's "Altdeutsche Blätter," i. 174.

Bürger, who commenced a translation of Homer, as well as Hölty, had shown a disposition to amalgamate German feeling with antique forms. A further advance in this direction was made by the brothers Stolberg, especially Friedrich Leopold, of that name, and by Johann Heinrich Voss, who were such friends in youth and such bitter foes in old age. Stolberg's Odes and Hymns have more plastic truth than Klopstock's, and his songs more simplicity of feeling, although in some there is a manifest straining after effect and false pathos, *e. g.* in "Süsse heilige Natur," and "Sohn da hast du meinen Speer." Some of the descriptions of nature are admirable, *e. g.* "Wenn ich einmal der Stadt entrinn." He was the first to eschew the foolish bardic vagaries of Klopstock and return to *real* German antiquity, so that he must be considered the precursor of the subsequent Romantic School. Few of his poems are now heard of. His perversion to popery has been censured as "an apostacy from the spirit of liberty."

Johann Heinrich Voss was one of the most energetic members of the Hainbund, if not the most talented poet among them. He was fond of describing the country and still life; he also shared with his contemporaries the taste for introducing classic studies into German poetry. But the dry common sense of his character forbade him to indulge in the soft sentimentality then so common. On the contrary, there is a touch of the mechanical, the utilitarian, and the commonplace in his poetry. Nevertheless, he was the first to make Homer accessible to his countrymen; nay, more, he was, after Rammler, the first to teach the

art of translating poetry into poetry; and although his versions of Homer and Virgil are faulty, and his Shakspeare a caricature, yet, as without a Rammler there would have been no Voss, so had there been no Voss, there would have been no Solger and Droysen. He gave fresh life and power to the poetic language, new versatility and firmness, and more accurate rules. As Rammler taught the proper ode measure, so Voss perfected the doctrine of the hexameter, which Klopstock had initiated. In short, his merits are chiefly in respect to language and form. His lyric pieces have an air of dull sobriety and dry reasoning about them, which are anything but lyrical. He was one of the first to write so-called songs for the people, which in every respect are the antipodes of popular poetry.

Again, his other poems, with few exceptions (*e. g.* the song for the new year, “Des Jahres letzte stunde ertönt mit ernstem schlag,”) are weak, full of reflections and moralising, and stupid polemics. In Idyls he is much better; vastly superior, indeed, to Geszner; but in one only of these, “Der siebenzigste Geburtstag,” has he embodied the life of the people in action. But even this does not rise beyond the rank of a Dutch picture, abounding in skilful painting of details, but without any grand prevailing idea. Too much pains, moreover, is expended in the description of Comfort,—a theme not by any means poetical.

The three Idyls on serfdom are most natural and true in the details; but there is a perceptible didactic object in them which greatly mars the poetic effect. The female characters in some of his Idyls (*e. g.*, “Die

Kirschenpflückerin," "Die Bleicherin," "Der Heumad,") are very unreal, and written in his lyric style; while his "Riesenhügel" is a complete failure. There are some very good features in his two Low German Idyls; but they are too artificial. His "Luise, ein ländliches Gedicht," which gave the first impulse to Goethe's epic, "Hermann and Dorothea," threw the reading world into a perfect ecstasy. The first and simpler draught of this poem possessed attractions which were greatly diminished in its subsequent form. Here, too, a great deal too much stress is laid on *Comfort*. If, as Ernestine Voss asserts, the character of the "Pfarrer von Grünau" is intended as the ideal of a country parson, it is a decided failure. And yet at one time Goethe's poem was considered to be a mere unfortunate imitation of "Luise."\* Still, as a succession of scenes of rustic life, without cares and without reflection, the poem is praiseworthy. There is truth in the descriptions of nature and of human feelings, without descending into the commonplace. Luise is an interesting character, and the love affair is described with tenderness and truth.

Apart from Goethe, Voss had several imitators. Many of them are mere exaggerated copyists, *e. g.*, Neuffer, with his "Tag auf dem Lande," Kosegarten, with his "Jucunde," and Pastor Schmidt, of Werneuchen, near Berlin, whom Goethe chastised in his "Musen und Grazien in der Mark." The Idyls of Martin Usteri, written in the Swiss dialect, contain

\* So Koch, in his "Compendium der deutschen Literatur-geschichte," 1798, 2. p. 187.



pictures of manners and delineations of character full of humour, and written in an earnest and excellent spirit. Johann Peter Hebel, a follower, but not an imitator of Voss, surpasses all others in the Idyl, and is truly popular in tone, an accomplishment which Voss tried to acquire in vain. His "Wiese" and other idyls are too erudite and full of ornament, but the descriptions of nature are exceedingly good. His idyl "Die Vergänglichkeit," with a popular foreground, has, at the same time, a background such as none of the other idyllic poets here mentioned has produced; and the "Sonntags Frühe" describes rustic life with incomparable truthfulness and poetic feeling. Among his lyric pieces there are also to be found some of the best features of popular poetry. But it is especially in his prose works that Hebel has caught the genuine Volkston (popular tone), in its highest and best sense. The tales of the Rheinischer Hausfreund, the best of which are collected in the "Schatz-Kästlein," are full of humour and deep feeling, and the style is very lively and pleasing. These simple stories are the delight of youth and the amusement of age. The subject matter, be it remarked, is generally borrowed from the popular books of facetiæ and anecdotes of the sixteenth century.\*

Matthias Claudius was connected with the Göttingen confederacy as a contributor to the "Musenalmanach." In true-hearted uprightness he is allied to Voss, whom

\* Hebel was born 11th May, 1760, at Basel, of poor peasant parents, in the Upperland of Baden. He became teacher at the Lyceum of Carlsruhe, and subsequently prelate, and died 22d September, 1828. He wrote chiefly in the first decade of the present century.

he also resembled in his love of describing nature. The soft melancholy of Hölty, and Stolberg's liking for earnest Christian poetry, are also shared by him. His "Täglich zu singen" ("Ich danke Gott und freue mich," &c.), his "Reise Urians," "Rheinweinlied" ("Bekränzt mit Laub den lieben vollen Becher"), which is certainly his composition, whatever may be said to the contrary\*, and, above all, his "Abendlied" ("Der Mond ist aufgegangen"), are known and sung everywhere. In his attempts at popular description he sometimes catches the true tone, but not always. Even his older poems, which are chiefly pictures of rustic happiness, exhibit some of the unnatural colouring to be found in Voss's poems on the same subject; while his prose sinks into tasteless mannerism and insufferable pedantry. But he has his good points, notwithstanding. He never became infected with the religious indifference so rife in those days; never for a moment fell into the snare of higgling and haggling about the historic truths of Christianity. It is no little credit to him that Schlosser and other modern historians accuse him of being deficient in sound sense.

The soft tone of the Göttingen School, which, of all those here mentioned, Hölty cultivated most, breaks out into pathetic susceptibility in Johann Martin

\* Matthias Claudius, born 1740, died 1815, wrote, after 1774, his "Asmus omnia sua secum portans," being a collection of his writings in the "Wandsbecker Bote," and which, for the Saxon North of Germany, have been what Hebel's writings were for the South. According to an account, originating from Hebel himself, Sander of Carlsruhe was the author of the famous "Rheinweinlied;" but this is incorrect, as it appeared first in Voss's "Musenalmanach" for 1776, with Claudius' name.

Miller. His "Siegwart" appeared in 1776, two years after Goethe's "Werther." It describes, not an illicit, but a virtuous love, and the hero does not commit suicide, but pines to death on the grave of his Marianne. It is difficult to conceive how it ever could have been so popular as it was, for, to a modern reader, it seems unutterably dull and commonplace. But it was this very quality of commonplace that caused it to be preferred to "Werther." For it was on this account more capable of being realised to the commonplace crowd than the more subtle and lofty "Werther." It found a great many imitators. Miller's other romances are more stupid still. The best known is the "Geschichte Karls von Burgheim und Emiliens von Rosenhau." His verses were long popular, especially those in "Siegwart," "Alles schläft, nur silbern schallet Mariannens Stimme noch," and "Es war einmal ein Gärtner der sang ein traurigs Lied." This last describes the lovesick, languishing swain with great truth, and transports us at once into the feelings of those susceptible days. Leopold Friedrich Günther Göckingk, though not one of the Göttingen Society, was intimate with its members, especially Bürger. In his youthful satires, which are of no mark, he copies Rabener. His epigrams are much better. Many of his poetic epistles are very good, *e. g.*, those, "An Auguste," "An seinen Fritz am Geburtstage," as also those to his servant. In his "Lieder zweier Liebenden" there is a truth and absence of artifice which contrast forcibly with the puling sentimentality of the Siegwart School.\*

\* Göckingk was born 1748, and died at Berlin, 1828.

We now come to the dramatists of this period. Leisewitz, in his "Julius von Tarent," follows Lessing. The subject matter of this piece, the history of Duke Cosmus of Florence and his sons, is the same as that of Klinger's "Zwillinge." They were both written in competition for a prize offered by Schröder, in Hamburg, in 1774, for the best prose tragedy. Klinger's piece obtained the prize. It breathes forth the passion of the "Genius" period; while Leisewitz's play is more in the strict form of Lessing; which, however, at times, becomes awkward. On first perusing it, Lessing supposed that Goethe was the author.

With Leisewitz, therefore, we pass from the adherents of Klopstock to those of Lessing. Nicolai,\* the bookseller of Berlin, resembled Lessing in his clear and intelligent way of looking upon things. But while this in Lessing rose into piercing artistic criticism, in Nicolai it subsided into flatness and jejuneness. Nothing would go down with Nicolai but what suited the commonest understandings, and might be turned to every-day utility. This was quite in the fashion of Gottsched. Anything like lofty poetry, or even true

\* Friedrich Christoph Nicolai was born at Berlin 1733, and died there 1811. In 1758 he commenced his "Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften." From 1761 to 1765, in conjunction with Lessing, Abbt, and Mendelsohn, he published "Die Briefe" on modern literature, and in 1765 founded "Die allgem. deutsche Bibliothek," and continued it till 1792, in 128 volumes. His insipid romances appeared 1770-1780. His collection of anecdotes about Frederick II., and "Tour through Germany," are as flat as flat can be. In his "Kleyner feyner Almanach von Volksliedern" (1775 and 1776), he endeavoured to make the "Folks-lay" ridiculous, but, instead, led to the first careful inquiry into the subject.

poetry at all, was his abomination. And so he made himself ridiculous by entering the lists against Goethe and Herder. In like manner he detested everything in the shape of philosophy, and therefore was an antagonist of the doctrines of Kant. Nay, more, he detested anything like a deep feeling of religion. In short, he hated whatever he could not understand. He was the hero of "the enlightenment and tastelessness" of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and the leader of all those who from that day to this have had no taste or capacity for science, poetry, or religious belief. His most popular work was the miserable romance, "Sebaldus Nothanker," in which he satirizes the religion of the Church. Those who thought with him on these matters extolled it as a first-rate specimen of humorous satire. His "Sempronius Gundibert," and "Geschichte eines dicken Mannes," are duller still. In conjunction with Lessing, he set on foot "The Letters on German Literature," the first thoroughly critical paper that ever appeared. Afterwards, for thirty years, he promulgated his doctrines of commonplace in the "Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek."

The lively style of Lessing was inherited chiefly by Johann Jacob Engel. In his "Philosoph für die Welt," there are pieces not unworthy of Lessing. His "Lorenz Stark," which first appeared in Goethe and Schiller's "Horen," was long considered to be a pattern in its way, but is as dry and flat as possible.

Lessing's followers in the dramatic line were not much to boast of either. The national tone of Minna von Barnhelm, the sharp and delicate delineations of

character in Emilia Galotti, were not appreciated by them. Instead of this, they looked upon every-day middle-class life, in all its naked, dull reality, as the proper subject of the drama; and this notion influences Germany to the present day. It is true there was now none of the unmeaning phraseology and hollow masquerade of Gryphius, Gottsched, and Co.'s plays. On the contrary, truth and reality ruled triumphant. Crowds of foresters and upper foresters, and secretaries (a pet character), councillors of war and justice, housewives who go distracted at the mistakes of servants, persecuted maidens, and so forth, fill the stage. Worst of all, the playwrights also attempted the moving "dodge," and the effect of a piece was measured by the quantity of wet kerchiefs.

Nor had Goethe, we may remark in passing, much better luck with his dramatic imitators. His "Götz" called into existence not any genuine national dramas, but the most perfect monstrosities that ever afflicted the stage. Such were the middle-age pieces, with the bandits, ravishings, dungeons, Vehmgerichts, overflowing brimmers, castle-chaplains, and other charming ingredients. Count Törring's "Agnes Bernauerin," and "Kaspar der Thoringer," as well as Babo's "Otto von Wittelsbach," are not yet forgotten. At all events, these are better than Crauer's "Berthold von Zähringen;" Maier's "Fürst von Stromberg;" Möller's "Graf von Waltron;" and Hahn's "Robert von Hohenecken." If the dramas in imitation of Lessing were too true, and sank into insipid platitudes, these, on the other, were distorted and untrue.



The representative of that unfortunate imitation of Lessing, the Burgher drama, or drama of every-day life, is August Wilhelm Iffland. In his pieces, which are still played now and then, there is so much resemblance, that one may almost be mistaken for another. To use the words of Schiller, you can discover from the opening scenes what vices and what virtue will come out. Whether the poor uncle shoots himself through the head, or the wicked Mathes receives a deadly wound from old Fritz; whether the Amtman absconds, or the secretary Falbring is imprisoned, it is pretty nearly one and the same story; although the titles may be different. Great magnanimity and great meanness; innocence bright as the sun and black criminality always stand side by side, like the bishop and knight in chess; and the plot is so transparent, *e.g.*, in “Die Dienstpflicht,” that it really is no plot at all. The play with the most life about it is “Die Jäger,” which has been played times out of number; but, after all, it is a matter of astonishment, how ever out of such materials the writer could have spun five acts.\*

All the faults which have been animadverted on, dry descriptions of prosy reality; then again, whining pathos, or bombast and unreality, every-day commonplace, affected sentimentality, knightly brimmers; are found united in August von Kotzebue.† Add to

\* Iffland was born at Hanover 1759, died at Berlin 1814. His dramatic works fill sixteen volumes. (Leipzig, 1798–1802.) In 1854 appeared a selection in 10 vols.

† Born at Weimar, 1761; in Russia from 1781 to 1797; afterwards in Vienna; sent to Siberia in 1800; afterwards in Weimar and Berlin;

these, however, Wieland's voluptuousness and Nicolai's frivolity, and the want of ideas of both, together with a little original indecency of his own; and all this dressed up with the most charming impudence, with the most dexterous coolness, and you have the staple of Kotzebue's poetry.

It has often been said that jealousy of Goethe and Schiller, who had settled in his native town of Weimar, induced the talented but vain and shallow Kotzebue to produce something that he imagined would throw both into the shade. For forty long years he plied this trade. It is strange that the Germans, albeit they might not discern the vileness of Kotzebue's pieces in an æsthetic point of view, were equally short-sighted as to their moral worthlessness. His "Menschenhass und Reue," ("The Stranger" of the English boards,) with its mock feelings and crocodile tears, filled all the German theatres from 1789 downwards. His other plays, "Die Hussiten vor Naumburg," "Johanna von Montfauçon," and "Die Kreuzfahrer," are still acted by strolling players. His farces,—they are not worthy of the name of comedies, *e. g.*, "Der Wirrwarr," "Der Wildfang," "Der Schauspieler wider Willen,"—are a thought better. His object here is merely to tickle the risible muscles, and this often done in miserable fashion, as in "Der Pächter Feldkümmel." Besides two hundred and eleven plays, he perpetrated

from 1806 to 1813 again in Russia; murdered 23rd March, 1819, at Mannheim. He wrote his most celebrated pieces from 1785 to 1795, but continued his literary labours to his death. The edition of 1827 comprises forty-four volumes; that of 1840, forty.

some romances, which are fitting counterparts to his dramas, *e. g.* his worthless "Leontine."

We now begin to branch off into the Wieland School. Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter represented the prevailing French taste, not with the influence indeed of Wieland, but with a certain tact and firmness. Gotha, where he resided, was the town of all others where this French taste longest prevailed. Gotter was a person of versatile talents. Like the school of Gleim, he wrote Frenchified Anacreontics; like Weisze, he composed operettas; like Göckingk, he imitated Horace's Epistles; and, in 1770, he combined with Boie to edit the "Göttingen Musenalmanach." He also wrote versions of French theatre pieces. But even in his lifetime he sank into the back-ground, and after his death, in 1797, was quite forgotten.

A still more direct influence was exercised by Wieland on the Viennese poet Alxinger, whose "Doolin von Mainz" and "Bliomberis" were immediate imitations of Wieland's "Oberon." These, as well as Müller's "Adalbert der Wilde," found favour with the public. But they exhibit the same arbitrary method of invention and description that proves so tiresome in Wieland. The irony of Wieland, which mars the effect of many good passages in his poems, was inherited by Aloys Blumauer, a Viennese Jesuit, afterwards a bookseller. He employs it without limit in his travesty of a part of the "Æneid." Some of his other poems, which are conspicuous for smoothness of language and easy fluency, are written in this burlesque style; but

they have more of the real comic about them than his "Æneid." Like Wieland, Blumauer labours under a paucity of ideas. He was one of those who joined in the opposition to Church and Clergy which marked the days of the Emperor Joseph II.

The wantonness of Wieland was imitated by Wilhelm Heinse, the author of "Ardinghello." This professes to be an "art romance," but it is merely a retrogression to the lowest sensuality.\* It has been edited anew by one of the modern emancipators of the flesh, H. Laube. As was mentioned above, Wieland's imitators in this direction eventually subside into a puddle of filth, so nasty as to alarm their Archetype himself.

The early works of Moritz August von Thümmel† are quite in Wieland's vein; but his later ones pass into the humoristic line of the Hamann and Herder School. His little work, "Wilhelmine," which was at one time much read, is an abortion alike in form and matter. The form is a disagreeable sort of poetic prose, the matter silly and frivolous facetiæ, without a single poetic thought. Nicolai's "Sebaldu Nothanker" claims to be considered as a continuation of "Wilhelmine." The "Inoculation der Liebe" is a poetic tale in the most ordinary Wieland style. Thümmel's "Tra-

\* Heinse was born 1749; died, 1803. To a certain extent he belongs to the geniuses of the "Storm Period." His worst productions were those of that time. "Ardinghello," which is a little more tolerable, appeared in 1787.

† Born, 1738; died, 1817. His "Travels in France" appeared in ten parts, from 1795 to 1805. His "Wilhelmine," and "Inoculation," twenty years earlier. His collective works, comprising his Biography, by Gruner, were published last in 1839.

vels in the South of France" was written more than twenty years later. It is to some extent an imitation of Sterne's "Sentimental Journey;" but the execution is original, and the style smooth and elegant. A hypochondriac solitary student becomes, by means of a long set of amatory adventures, a man of the world and a sensualist. Thus far the romance is in the offensive style of Wieland, and was, as such, severely censured by Schiller. Subsequently there is some didactic moralizing to show the impropriety of this part, instead of arriving at this conclusion by the development of the plot. In fact, the plot negatives the moral. At the same time, the work abounds with clever reflections in the tone of the Hamann and Herder School.

And this brings us to consider Hamann further. It is not the matter, but the manner of his compositions which raises him into importance. In treating of little matters he manages to say great things. This art of striking sparks out of the most unpromising materials, of making uninteresting things interesting, and awaking an interest also in the person of the author, was possessed likewise by Herder, though in a more universal and nobler form.

The next successor to Hamann in this group of German humourists is Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel.\* He is the author of "Lebensläufe in aufsteigender Linie" and "Kreuz- und Quer- züge des Ritters A—Z." In the former work the elegiac tone predominates. There

\* Born, 1741; died, 1796. The "Lebensläufe" appeared 1779 to 1781. The "Kreuz- und Quer- züge," 1793. His collective works, 1827–1838, in 14 vols.

are some excellent descriptions in it. But there is a good deal of talk about the unimportant concerns and experiences of the writer—a feature perceivable in Hamann and the other humourists. The latter work is more of a satirical nature, though it never rises high enough for genuine satire, and, compared with the “*Lebensläufe*,” it is dull and wearisome.

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg,\* the well-known commentator on the designs of Hogarth, wrote some smaller pieces, much more akin to real satire, *e. g.*, that against Lavater, and that against the juggler Philadelphia; but he never, with all his projects, could succeed in producing a satire on a large scale. The defect with him was that he never could make up his mind how to view the various great questions of the age. As a commentator, however, on Hogarth, he was much more in his element, and had more scope for fancy and conjecture. In smoothness of diction, liveliness of description, and in striking effects, there are few descriptive works in German that surpass this of Lichtenberg’s.

We now come to Jean Paul Friedrich Richter.† There was a section of the reading world which was in

\* Born at Oberramstadt, near Darmstadt, 1742; died a Professor at Göttingen, 1799. The best of his pieces were written 1775–1785, chiefly for newspapers. They were collected after his death. His “*Explanation of Hogarth*,” which he left incomplete, appeared 1794–1799.

† Born 21st March, 1763, at Wunsiedel, and died at Baireuth, 24th November, 1825. His first work, “*Grönländische Prozesse*,” appeared 1782. Except the “*Komet*,” he wrote nothing of importance after 1808. His satirical works are, the “*Grön. Prozesse*,” “*Die Auswahl aus den Teufels Papieren*” (1788), “*Des Feldpredigers Schmelzle Reise nach Flätz*” (1805), and “*Katzenberger’s Badereise*” (1808), the last of which is the best. His other chief works are, “*Die unsichtbare Loge*”



a strait as to which they should prefer, the very grand or the very little; the ideal or the real; the elegiac tone or that of satire. For them the majestic sweep of Goethe's and Schiller's genius was oppressive and crushing, and they, therefore, elected to involve themselves in the soft silver threads of individual feeling. And the declared favourite of these people was Richter. In him there are many more various elements than in the former humourists. The taste for the sentimental, with its sweet gentle tones, stuck to him through life, and they are clearly heard in his last work, "Selina." Like humourists generally, he had no poetic development. His last works are exactly like his first. He is essentially the poet of youth; youth with its happy dreams and extraordinary doubts; its idyllic satisfaction and far-seeing plans, its frivolous sports and great imaginings. All those who, like the poet himself, have somewhat of the boy in them their life long, are taken with Jean Paul. Others, again, who, as they advance in years, affect a more manly style of poetry, cease to take an interest in his productions. It has been observed that many of his admirers have afterwards become indifferent to him, but not *vice versâ*. Nobody who has read real satire will let him pass as a satirist. He is

(1793), "Hesperus" (1795), "Quintus Fixlein" (1796), "Titan" (1800-1803), "Flegeljahre" (1803-1805). The popular "Blumen-Frucht- und Dornstücke" (1796) are an insignificant affair. His works appeared in 1826-1828, in sixty parts, to which were added five supplementary volumes. In 1840 there was a fresh edition, in thirty-three volumes. His "Biography" has been overdone, Spazier, Wahrheit aus J. Paul's Leben, 1826, in eight volumes. Id. "Biographie Richters," 1833, in five volumes.

too circuitous and loitering for that. This tendency to laggard description is visible alike in the "*Grönländische Prozessen*," in the "*Auswahl aus des Teufels Papieren*," in "*Katzenberger*," and in "*Feldprediger Schmelzle*," and damages whatever of satire they contain.

But satire is not his forte. His charm consists in that innocent and hearty, that sad and yearning tone of his descriptions,—those playful flashes which he flings around. The beauty of isolated passages makes the reader blind to the defects of the whole. We forget, in the many shining traits of his individual characters, that scarcely one of these characters is consistently worked out, let alone poetically complete. He is always full of sentiment, and feeling, and contemplation; and hardly ever proceeds to action. The brilliancy of one passage dazzles our eyes, so that we do not perceive that it has around it two or three obscure ones. We forget that he heaps up material without end, but does not digest it. Nay, it is possible that this very obscurity,—these dark, incomprehensible hints,—these half-formed conclusions,—were the very spell that served to captivate his countrymen. Like so many children, he made them laugh and cry in a breath. In fact, with many, his enigmatical way of writing, provoking as it did the reader's curiosity, was the main charm. But all this does not raise him to the dignity of an artistic writer.

He never could master his material, so as to put it into artistic shape; and yet there is hardly a page where we do not discover evidence of elaboration and

nicety in the working up of his heterogeneous matter. How intolerable is his style after reading the prose of Luther, or of Schiller, Lessing, and Goethe! How ungraceful that mannerism, that continual pausing, digressing, rushing hither and thither! Such an affluence of unwrought material,—a style so intricate and involved, so full of shreds and patches, are quite at variance with the rules of descriptive writing.

Still we must by no means lose sight of the beneficial influence exercised by Jean Paul on the middle ranks of society in those days of triviality, rudeness, and immorality. Many were glad to escape from the fever heats and colds of revolutionary agitation to the mild warmth of his writings. He saved them, as many of them feelingly testify. For half a generation, Jean Paul was the sole refuge of German heartiness and fervour, of innocence and affection. And were such rude, and cold, and desert times to recur, he might again prove the haven of repose for the tenderer spirits unfitted to cope with the tempest of the world.

Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann, commonly called Amadeus Hoffmann, originally resembled Jean Paul. Subsequently, he struck into another line—the wild, horrible, and monstrous. Whilst Jean Paul adhered to the idyllic, and sought to interweave with every-day matters the bright ideals of gentle feeling, the ideals of sadness and tenderness, Hoffmann drew out from the dark depths of his imagination a flood of horrors, to confuse and overwhelm the mind. His “*Phantasie-stücken*” and “*Serapionsbrüder*,” are not bad in point of description; but his works generally have less

artistic finish about them than even those of Jean Paul. This will apply to "Kater Murr," "Teufelselixer," "Nussknacker," and "Mäusekönig." \*

The rest of the numerous humourists have this feature in common, that they all wander far away from Goethe, and most of them from Schiller.

Such are Schummel, Meiszner, Knigge, Gottwerth Müller, Benzel-Sternau, Langbein, and others. Ernst Wagner's "Wilibald's Ansichten des Lebens" and "Reisen aus der Fremde in die Heimat," were once favourites in Germany, especially the first. He has not the wealth of Jean Paul, but he far surpasses him in the capacity for throwing his matter into poetic shape. His works suffer most from the practical remarks and plans which he is fond of intruding upon the reader.

As for Gottfried Seume, the burden of all his writings is himself, a personage, by the way, anything but rich in invention, and by no means agreeable or poetical; on the contrary, very jejune and dry, while his humour is very like suppressed rage.

We now come to those writers who followed in the wake of Goethe and Schiller. And first may be mentioned the fellow-workers of Goethe in the "Storm and Impulse" Period.

\* Hoffmann was born at Königsberg, 1776. He was a Prussian functionary in Poland from 1800 to 1806; afterwards, till 1814, Director of Music at Bamberg and Dresden; from 1816 to his death, in 1822, Kammergerichtsrat at Berlin. Hitzig has published (1823, in two volumes) an account of his literary labours, which fill up the last quarter of his life.

Of these, Friedrich Maximilian Klinger is the most considerable. His wild dramas are in tone so like Schiller's, who came out later, that "The Robbers" sounds as if it were the production of a second Klinger, and Schiller has been accused, in consequence, of not only imitating Klinger generally, but also of borrowing certain of his characters. Like Schiller, he endeavoured to pourtray "virtuous monsters" or "noble rascals." His characters are invariably caricatures, full of a sort of unconscious Titanic power, which is displayed in frightful phrases and terrible actions. His most famous play is the "Zwillinge," mentioned above, written in 1774. It won the prize; but now-a-days, nobody would care to read it through. His best known drama is "Sturm und Drang," connected with the history of the Scottish kings. It was from this piece that the "Genius" Period came to be called by the well-known name "Sturm und Drang" Period. In 1778, Klinger left the theatre and entered into the service of Russia. From this time forward he began to be insipid. He still continued to depict the frightful and the destructive, reprobate wickedness, and hopeless misfortune, not, however, in dramas, but in romances. He still described the Titanic power of man in destroying, in working evil, in supporting calamity; but it was with the coldness of a cynic, the calm of a stoic, which regards transactions the most horrible as mere every-day occurrences. Of these philosophical romances, as we may almost call them, "Fausts Leben, Thaten und Höllenfahrt" ranks first.

This makes the third member of the "Genius" Period, besides Lessing, who had selected this favourite old subject. But Klinger's Faust is far inferior to the Faust of Goethe, who fought out the mighty struggle within. This is a mere contemporary picture, where the demoniacal lies in the world without. His romance of terror, "Geschichte Rafaels de Aquillas," appeared in 1793, and was still read with interest twenty-five years later. Both this and "Geschichte Giasars des Barmaciden," a similar production, were better liked than his Faust. In the "Genius" Period, Klinger used to go about Weimar in rags, and Wieland said of him that he looked as if he drank lion's blood and ate raw flesh. He died February 25, 1831, one year before Goethe, having become a Russian Lieutenant-General and Curator of the University of Dorpat.

The painter Müller also took up the subject of Faust, and treated it quite in the ordinary fashion of the period. Faust is meant to represent "a royal soul," but all that he has in common with Goethe's Faust is an insatiate taste for enjoyment. In all the features of poetic life he widely differs from him. In spite of a few happy hits, the piece looks like a mis-carried satire. One of his best works is "Genoveva," which drew the attention of the Romantic School to him when he had been long forgotten. But his best works are his Idyls, "Das Nuskernen," and "Die Schafschur," wherein he describes real rustic life, very differently from what Geszner did, and in a much more sinewy style than Voss, who wrote a little later.



Indeed, he exhibits not unfrequently sterling popular features.\*

The folly of the "Genius" period is best characterised by Philip Hahn's monstrous piece, "*Der Aufruhr in Pisa*." Reinhold Lenz was one of Goethe's friends in Strasburg, but a bad-dispositioned person. Like Grabbe, he died in misery and madness, and like him he threw together a quantity of heterogeneous matter in a rakehelly genial fashion.

Leopold Wagner of Strasburg, who was also one of Goethe's false friends in the Strasburg period, is sure of immortality. He wrote a satire against Nicolai in his dispute with Goethe about "*Werther*," and also a drama, "*Die Kindesmörderin*," the material of which he had purloined from Goethe, who avenged himself by making Wagner Faust's famulus in the play.

At the period when Goethe and Schiller were in their glory, a galaxy of variously gifted and genial spirits centered round them at Weimar and Jena. Poetry made its influence felt in science, in the plastic arts, and in life. From this conjunction of poetry with life in those two cities, but more particularly in Jena, we do not, it is true, hear of any magnificent results. Still the idea had been broached that poetry must away from books and the closet, and penetrate into society, in order to purge it of all that was low and

\* Friedrich Müller was born at Kreuznach, 1750; lived long in Rome, and died there 23rd April, 1825. His works appeared separately from 1773 to 1781, and were little regarded. They were collected in 1811.

mean and Philistine-like.\* And such an idea must needs become prevalent where so many youthful geniuses were congregated together. At Jena there were at one and the same time Reinhold and Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, Woltmann, Thibaut, and Hufeland, Voss, the two Humboldts, and the two Schlegels, Steffens and Brentano,—all of them teaching and being taught, stimulating and striving.

This idea, in fact, of preaching and restoring the unity of poetry with life is the fundamental idea of the new school which now arose, and which was called, chiefly by its opponents, the Romantic School. According to this school, a poet was the ideal of the age—its supremest power. He it was who ought to make all the phenomena of the day, in life, in art, in science, his own, assimilate them, and then reproduce them in their purest form,—a dogma to be learnt only in the examples of Herder, Goethe, and Schiller.

It was this idea of the unity of poetry and life that attached its apostles so warmly to the middle ages. They were right in holding up to admiration the days of the people's epic, and the Minnesingers of the thirteenth century, as a time when their ideal was at all events realised in a much higher degree than in the period when they were living. Here poetry was an affair of dead papers and dumb reading; there it was life-like, merry song, which accompanied life with its clear-sounding music, enlivening all its checkered and many-coloured career. This persuasion it was that

\* A term of contempt used by German students for low, commonplace people.

stamped itself so vividly on the works of Armin and Brentano, and on the brothers Grimm, and led them to take such delight in the popular song and legend. Further, this school felt a sympathy for poetry of all kinds, and therefore made it their particular business to reveal all the hidden treasures of Romance poetry, and to wed its forms to the German ideas, in the same way as the antique form had hitherto been wedded to the spirit of German poetry. This idea, however, of the unity of poetry with actual life involved the condition that there should be a unity between the two in everything; in manners, in language, in ends and aims, and, above all, a unity in popular religious belief. This is what the heads of the school mean by their "symbolic views of the world;" they look upon life, that is, as the symbol of some great mystery. This it was that threw Novalis back so decidedly on religion; this it was that made Friedrich Schlegel a papist; fancying as he did, that this inward unity was an impossibility for one holding the Reformed Faith. Finally, it was this idea that made the romantic school stand up for the old state forms, the time-honoured kingly rule, and the fidelity of the vassals, as the immovable symbol of all worldly dignity, honour, and grandeur:—notions which were, of course, quite incompatible with modern ideas, and as such have been stigmatized as hypocrisy, Jesuitism, priestcraft, tyranny of mind and conscience, and what not.

There can be no doubt, however, that Germany owes much to this school. All the modern lyrics belong to it both in form and subject, with the sole exception of

what is called *Tendenz Lyrik*, i. e. lyrics with a moral tendency. That new science, the History of Literature, was first started by it. Sculpture, painting, and philology, as pursued by the brothers Grimm, owe a great debt to it; so that, after all, this school has, in accordance with its principles, to some extent caused poetry to penetrate into actual life. It has also done no little for sound criticism and the correction of bad taste; and has contributed much towards the just appreciation of Goethe's poetry. Domestic and family romances began at this period to be popular, along with the works of Lafontaine, and the theatre was invaded by the silly sentimentalities of the Burgher drama. Of all such affected, unmeaning, untrue emotion, which they considered the very opposite of true poetry, the Romantic School was the sworn foe. They ridiculed the soft pictures of nature by a Matthison, and laid bare with merciless hand the dramatic trash of a Kotzebue.

Kotzebue and his adherents (Garlieb Merkel, who died in 1850, was one of the chiefest) did not shirk the contest. While the Romantic School arrayed their powers in the "*Zeitung für die elegante Welt*," the stronghold of the Kotzebue party was the "*Freimüthigen*," a journal which, albeit it was as stale, flat, and unprofitable as it well could be, pretended to advocate the highest interests of free thought, and even of Protestantism, as against "the Romanizing tendencies" of the Romantics, and took Ulrich von Hutten's portrait as its emblem. But besides Kotzebue's lucubrations, there was a swarm of other vapidities which were at

that time in the full swing of popularity. Imitations of "Götz" and "the Robbers" were rife, *e.g.*, Zschokke's "Abällino." To which may be added, "Die Löwenritter," "Rinaldo Rinaldini," and the countless other products of a Cramer, a Spiess, and a Schlenkert, most of which are based upon Wieland. Against this scum, which at the end of the last century almost destroyed all taste for the poetry of Schiller and Goethe among the middle classes, the school of Schlegel and Tieck set itself in opposition. Tieck especially was continually doing battle against these romances of robbers and chivalry. But the Romantic School did not rest here.

A. W. Schlegel flew at higher game. He attacked Schiller, and pronounced his dramatic figures deficient in lively reality, in warmth, and fulness. In them the unity of poetry and life seemed to him not to be accomplished. This criticism of his was subsequently exaggerated by others of the school, who proceeded to inform the public that Schiller was no poet at all. This school even went so far as to set itself over Goethe, while in Novalis and Tieck it beheld the very revelation of poetry.

It has been objected, moreover, to this school, and with some reason, that it is not enough natural and real, —that its criticism is mere clever playfulness, and too full of irony. It cannot be denied that in Tieck's "Phantasmus" the natural power of fairy-poetry is much impaired by the accompanying artistic reflections, and by the clever conversations of a set of polite moderns that are interspersed.

The great merit of A. W. Schlegel lies in his rare faculty of adopting and assimilating foreign matter, the most considerable proof of which he exhibits in his translation of Shakspeare. His original poems are less remarkable for matter than for the pure transparency and excellence of the forms. Friedrich Schlegel's lyrics are not numerous, but they excel his brother's in their fresh power and originality. But where he shines most is in the history of literature. He was the first to introduce profounder views into this species of composition; indeed, he was the creator of it. His juvenile romance, "Lucinde," was defended even by Schleiermacher, but of genuine poetry it possesses very little.

As for their dramatic attempts, neither the "Ion" of the elder, nor the "Alarcos" of the younger brother fall within the proper province of the German drama; like the "Iphigenia" of Goethe, they are only dramas in form.\*

Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), the friend of the Schlegels, though he wrote less, yet exercised an

\* August Wilhelm von Schlegel was born at Hanover, 5th September, 1767; lived during the period of the rise of the Romantic School at Jena; afterwards in Berlin; subsequently a good deal in the society of Madame de Staël; then at Paris, where he devoted himself to Indian literature. From 1818 he was Professor at Bonn, where he died 12th May, 1845. His works were collected in 1846.

His brother, Friedrich, was born 10th March, 1772. When the Romantic School began, he was teacher in Jena. After embracing the Roman faith, he lived chiefly at Vienna, and died at Dresden, 11th January, 1829. His works were collected, 1822, in ten volumes, and have frequently been republished. Both brothers wrote their poetical works in the latter part of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.



influence greater than theirs. He died young. It is only to his religious poems, however, that we can ascribe any high poetic value. His unfinished romance, "Heinrich von Ofterdingen," is an artistic failure. It does not so much consist in a life-like portrayal of characters, or a series of actions skilfully connected, as in a string of arguments. The rest of his writings are nothing but a collection of aphorisms and sentences, which are often keen and profound, but sometimes paradoxical, and not seldom obscure. Nevertheless, they have taught the youth of Germany deeper and more earnest views of life than they could find among their greatest authors. They serve, to some extent, as a sort of commentary on the better and best parts of literature generally.

Ludwig Tieck was much more of a creative genius than his three friends just mentioned. His literary career lasted more than fifty years. Commencing with novels, he betook himself afterwards to drama-writing; but returned eventually to the novel. His earliest works, "Abdallah," and "William Lovell," were the produce of a period when his views were undeveloped. Like his last work, "Victoria Accorombona," there is a gloomy character about them, and they move in the oppressive atmosphere of unsoftened passion. His "Franz Sternbald," which was supposed to be the joint work of Tieck and his friend Wackenroder, is, according to Tieck's own assurance, his own sole composition. Though unfinished, it is considered one of the best German "Art Romances," and has done much towards awakening a correct taste

in art. His "Peter Lebrecht," "Gestiefelter Kater," "Prinz Zerbino," "Verkehrte Welt," and especially his excellent dramas, "Leben und Tod Der Heiligen Genoveva," "Fortunatus," and "Kaiser Octavianus," are all directed against the preposterous tendencies of the period. Here he attacks those shameful parodies of the Middle Ages, the stupid dramas and romances about knights and robbers, as well as the soft sentimentality and trumpery common-place of the house and family romances. The three last-mentioned works are allowed to be the *chef-d'œuvres* of Romantic literature.

In the "Phantasmus," which is perhaps his most popular work, he dresses up with great skill and delicacy those capital old popular sagas of "Magelone" "Getreuer Eckart" and "Rothkäppchen," ("Red Riding-hood.") The novels which he wrote in the last twenty years of his life, *e. g.*, "Der Aufruhr in den Cevennen," "Das Dichterleben," are by many considered superior to his earlier poetic compositions—a judgment in which posterity will hardly coincide.

His latest novels, "Der junge Tischlermeister," and "Victoria Accorombona," have not added to his fame. He rendered good service to the German drama by his "Dramaturgische Blätter," and "Deutsches Theater," and also by his participation in A. W. Schlegel's translation of Shakspeare. He was also the first to make his countrymen acquainted with the spirit of the Minnesingers by his translations and versions.\*

\* Tieck was born 31st May, 1773, at Berlin, and died there 28th April, 1853. His earliest works, "Abdallah" (1795), and "William

Ludwig Joachim (or Achim) von Arnim, and Clemens Brentano, also laboured in the same cause, but in a different manner, viz., by editing afresh, rendering, and imitating the popular lyrics of the sixteenth century. Their "Wunderhorn" stands pre-eminent in its way. In their other works, which are chiefly prose, there is a certain want of form, which detracts from the interest. It is seldom that Arnim, still seldomer that Brentano, finishes his story in the spirit in which it began. Brentano's best work is his latest, "Gockel Hinkel and Gackeleia;" which, in a delicate apprehension of nature-life, is one of the best things in the language. The simplicity and fervour of this "Märchen" is with difficulty appreciated in these unquiet days.\*

In her romance, "Goethe's Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde," Bettina, the sister of Brentano, and wife of Arnim, has realised, with no little originality and skill, the old doctrine of the school, "the restoration of the unity between poetry and life." The life here described is so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of poetry, that

Lovell" (1795), remind us, partly of the "Genius Period" of twenty years before, partly of Heinse. His polemical works against the prevalent unpoetic tendencies of the times, viz., "Peter Leberecht," "Gestiefelter Kater," and "Zerbino," date from 1797 to 1799. Then follow his romances, 1799. Then "Der Kaiser Octavianus," and in 1812 "Phantasia." His collection of German Minnelieder appeared in 1803, and in 1812 his version of Ulrich von Liechtenstein's "Frauendienst." His lyrics were written during the same period as his romances.

\* Arnim was born 26th January, 1781, at Berlin, and died at Wierpersdorf, 21st January, 1831. Brentano was born at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, 1777; died at Aschaffenburg, 28th July, 1842. His posthumous works, published by Görres, are not more important than those which he himself published.

the reader fancies himself transported to the days of the Minnesingers, when life was poetry and poetry was life. The notion that this book was a recital of historical transactions has been detrimental to its fame.

Friedrich Baron de la Motte Fouqué\* endeavoured to represent the spirit of ancient chivalry in nobler forms than did the clumsy writers of the earlier chivalric romances. In spite of the animadversions passed upon him, it may with truth be affirmed that Fouqué, although at times he is fantastic and vague, has thoroughly succeeded in resuscitating poetically those merry days of chivalry and song at the end of the twelfth century. This applies especially to his "Zauberring," "Theodolf der Isländer," and the beautiful tale "Undine." His poetry, though often felicitous, is not equal to his prose; partly in consequence of his venturing to regions above his capacity, *e. g.* in "Sigurd der Schlangentödter."

The remaining members of the Romantic school are now forgotten, *e. g.* A. F. Bernhardi, the brother-in-law of Tieck, Wilhelm Neumann, Alexander von Blomberg, Friedrich Krug von Nidda. The same is true of Karl Borromäus von Miltiz and Ernst von der Malsburg, the translator of Spanish dramas, although at one time these two were very popular. Forgotten, too, is Otto Heinrich Count von Löben, the effeminate and high-flown "Isidorus Orientalis." It is far otherwise with Karl Lappe, and also with Joseph v. Eichendorf, whose poems and stories, and his "Leben

\* Born at Brandenburg, 1777; died at Berlin, 23rd January, 1844. His "Zauberring" appeared in 1815.

eines Taugenichts," in heartfelt truth, surpass all the productions of the older Romantic School.\*

There are two writers who, though they were not regular members of the school, wrote in the spirit of it, especially lyrics. These are Friedrich Hölderlin, whose mind was early obscured by the darkness of insanity, and Ernst Schulze, the poet of the "Bezauberte Rose" and "Cäcilie." In his early poems Hölderlin imitated Schiller, and in theory espoused the dogmas of the Schlegel School, traces of which may be found in not a few of his poems. His peculiarity is that he does not, like the other romanticists, go back to the old national life of the Germans, but to the ancient Hellenism. He seeks to reconcile these two diametrical opposites, the reality of Greek life and the reality of modern life, and herein he betrays symptoms of that inward disunion which, in his thirty-second year, grew into insanity. In many of his poems he has attained to the pure antique form. The subject-matter, too, is often attractive, the description clear and graceful, and the deep tone of sadness which pervades the whole is not without its charm.

Like Hölderlin, Ernst Schulze was the victim of an unhappy passion. A low, soft plaint pervades all his poetry, prophetic almost of his early death. So musical are his verses that he has been compared to the Minnesingers. In point of matter, his lyrics are much to be preferred to his romantic stories, "Die bezauberte Rose," and "Cäcilie," which are artificial in sentiment,

\* For an account of the more important personages of the Romantic School, see "Briefe an Fouqué," edited by Albertine v. Fouqué, with preface, &c., by Kletke, 1847.

and want life and action ; while their sweetness is cloying, and monotony fatiguing.

Chamisso, although a Frenchman by birth, was an admirable German poet. In point of form, his lyrics are quite in the style of the Romantic School. With his " Schloss Boncourt " few modern German lyrics can compare. Like Schlegel's School, he made it his task to appropriate and imitate foreign models ; and he did so with success. He even wrote verses in the Malay form, while, in his " Salas y Gomez," he strikes into the long-neglected walk of poetic narrative—a direction in which none but Annette Droste has ventured to follow him. In his well-known " Peter Schlemhil " he has clothed in poetic forms the grief that he himself had experienced as an exile from his fatherland.\*

The time is not yet come to enter into a detailed account of the succeeding writers. A few outlines must suffice.

Justinus Kerner caught, more than any of his contemporaries, the plaintive, passionate tone of the popular lay (Volkslied). His song, " Wolauf noch getrunken den funkelnden Wein," well portrays the German's desire to roam, and his love of home. Few

\* Louis Charles Adelaide de Chamisso de Boncourt, or, as he called himself, Adalbert von Chamisso, was born at the Castle of Boncourt, in Champagne, 27th January, 1781. Driven away by the Revolution, he went to Berlin, and was for ten years in the military service of Prussia. After studying in Berlin, he went, as naturalist, on the Romanzow voyage of discovery, on board the Rurik. Subsequently, he was curator of the Botanical Garden at Berlin, and died 21st August, 1838. Before his travels, he was a thorough disciple of the romantic school, which then existed in Berlin. " Peter Schlemhil " appeared in 1814. Most of his lyrics were written in the last ten years of his life. His works were published by Hitzig, in six volumes, in 1838.



writers have written songs so melodious—so made for singing—as he ; few are so seducing and touching.

Uhland has pierced deep into the hearts of the youth of Germany with his poems on the history and legendary lore of his country. Keeping clear of the dreamy exaggeration which clung to the nationalism of the older romanticists, his songs are, like his sentiments, true, and his poetic figures real.

Gustav Schwab is also a writer in the national vein, but with less marked character than Uhland. Like Kerner, he has made his countrymen familiar with the poetic sounds of the legend, and both of them surpass the older Romantic School in truth of feeling and simplicity of portraiture. Schwab has also written poems of an earnest and religious cast, which have been imitated by Grüneisen, Knapp, Stier, Spitta, and Victor Strauss. These serious poems are, however, more calculated for private than public use.

Karl Simrock, who has been mentioned in the earlier part of this work, has devoted his talents to the old popular heroic poems. Some of these he has retold ; while, in other cases, he has managed, out of long-forgotten sagas, to create new poems upon the ancient pattern, *e. g.* “*Wieland der Schmid.*”

Wilhelm Hauff, who died young, also wrote in the same line, but with too much youthful sentimentality. Far superior to him is August Heinrich Hofmann (von Fallersleben), who, in his songs of the German Landsknechts, reproduced with marvellous felicity the best elements of the old popular lay of Germany. It is to be regretted that he has not gone on in this line, for which he has so remarkable a talent.

Other, but less distinguished, writers in the national tone are the Swabians, Mayer, Gustav Pfizer, and Mörike, the brothers August and Adolf Stöber of Alsace, and the Austrians, Vogl, Seidl, and Dräxler-Manfred.

Wackernagel, who has cultivated his talents by the study of the German Poetry of the olden time; Kopisch, the humourous lyrist; Robert Reinick, a master in the naïve and arch love-song; Franz Gaudy, whose "Liebeslieder" are far better than his "Kaiserlieder;" Freiligrath, who writes with clearness and sharpness of perception, but whose brilliant colouring often becomes glaring, who abounds in rhetoric and rhyme, while, at times, he falls into great harshness of expression; and, lastly, Emanuel Geibel:—all of these possess no little originality and poetic capacity. The delicacy and finely drawn figures of the last-mentioned writer, his deep and heartfelt tones, render him one of the most notable poets of the day.

But in originality of form and matter, most of the moderns are excelled by a lady—perhaps the only real poetess Germany ever produced—Anna Elizabet von Droste-Hülshoff.\* In her lyric poems she speaks out, with the sharp accents of truth, the deepest experiences of the pure female mind; while her poetic tales are among the very best of the present age. Though in expression she may at times not be sufficiently clear, yet the subjects she selects are invariably poetical and noble, and often grand.

\* Born at Münster, and died, 24th May, 1848, at Meersburg, on the Lake of Constance, aged 51. Her poems, all written in the latter years of her life, were first published 1838, then 1844.

Giesebrecht is the poet of the serious and sincere side of German domestic life. Zedlitz is the poet of modern elegy, in his "Todtenkränzen, which have not met with the fame they deserve. He was, however, one of the first of his countrymen to write verses in honour of Napoleon. His "Waldfräulein" is quite in the elder romantic line. Wolfgang Menzel's "Rübezahl" is likewise in the earlier romantic mode. He has a great talent for description, and writes the most melodious verses, in language the most correct. Not less noteworthy is Wilhelm Müller\*, the poet of Greek liberty. The sweet strains of his "Reisender Waldhornist" were soon followed by the deep, piercing notes of the Greek songs, which set all the world on fire, emanating, as they did, from a rare and genuine enthusiasm.

We now arrive at the transition from this old state of things, with its calm content; its delight in the ancient glories, actual and poetical, of Germany, and in its liberation from a foreign yoke; and we pass to the new state of things, with its uneasy expectation and discontent. The men of this transition are Anastasius Grün (Anton Alexander Count Auersberg) and Nikolaus Lenau (Nikolaus Nimbsch von Strehlenau).† The former, in his "Blätter der Liebe," half

\* The father of the present learned Taylor Professor of Modern Languages in the University of Oxford.—*Editor*.

† Born, 1802, in Hungary. He was one of those visionary and uneasy geniuses who, in this life, look for a Utopia. Like Hölderlin, he became deranged, and died in a madhouse, at Vienna, 22nd August, 1850. He published his collected poems, 1834. "Faust" appeared, 1837; "Savonarola," 1838; "Die Albigenser," 1842.

Died at Paris, 1856.—*Editor*.

imitates the usual tone of the Austrian poets, and half the playful manner of Heine. He soon, however, betook himself to national poetry, *e. g.* in "Der letzte Ritter," and then to political poetry, in the "Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten," and in "Schutt." His style is always firm and noble, but not always flexible. His "Nibelungen in Frack" bespeaks him to be no mean humorist. In thought and form Lenau is much less firm. His lyrics owe their reputation more to the interest of the moment than to any intrinsic merit. His "Faust" is confused, and his "Savonarola" and "Albigenser" good only in parts.

Like the above, Heinrich Heine issued from the Romantic School. But he soon adopted another tone, which was anything but beneficial to the cause of poetry. Remarkably deep poetic perception, with the most superficial frivolity, an unconstrained ease of expression, accommodating itself to the subject with the most charming readiness; and, on the other hand, not unfrequently, utter negligence and slovenliness of composition,—such were his characteristics throughout. He has too lately passed away to admit of a final judgment being given upon him and his transient Aweary-of-the-world School; but there is no doubt that posterity will judge of him as they judged of Bürger, that he was endowed with excellent points, nay, with almost a creative genius, which was ruined for want of moderation.

The drama of the Schlegel School is represented by Matthäus von Collin, Heinrich von Kleist, who died early by his own hand, and Adam Oehlenschläger, the Dane. The first of these, albeit he makes a laudable

attempt to place before us great historic characters, with a grand historic background, yet fails to infuse into his pieces the requisite quantum of life and movement. With Lessing's "Minna" or Goethe's "Götz" we cannot compare them; and they fall short of Schiller's "Wallenstein."

Kleist's "Kätchen von Heilbronn" and "Prinz von Homburg" are known on the German stage, and indicate considerable, but uncertain and undeveloped talent.

The translations of Spanish dramas made by the successors of the Romantic School are a mistake. Not much can be said in praise of their own national plays. One of the best of these is Uhland's "Ernst von Schwaben," which handles the very ancient national legend that has been already mentioned. This piece has some good national colouring, and the old fidelity between Ernst and Wernher is well brought out. The other characters, however, lack individuality, and the transactions sufficient motive; while the action is less regarded than the speech-making. Immermann's "Hofer" wants the proper poetic distance of events to make it dramatically effective.

In his earlier dramas, "Die Söhne des Thales" (at least in the first part of it, "Die Templar auf Cypren"), "Das Kreuz an der Ostsee," and "Martin Luther," Zacharias Werner gave promise of a poetic realisation of the tenets of the New School.\* In "Luther,"

\* Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner born, 1768, at Königsburg; died, 1823, at Vienna. He wrote his early works during his residence at Warsaw, where he led a very dissolute life. In 1811 he turned Papist, at Rome; and a little afterwards wrote his "24th February." In 1814 he became a priest, and favourite preacher at Vienna. Not long before his death he joined the order of the Redemptorists. A

however, the matter and the manner become obscure. His "Der vier-und-zwanzigste Februar" is much more famous. This is the first of those "Tragedies of Fate," afterwards so notorious, with which Houwald, Müllner, and Grillparzer invaded the stage. These, to wit, such plays as Müllner's "Schuld," about which all the world at one time raved, and Grillparzer's "Ahnfrau," are the very counterpart of true poetry. The hollow pathos of these "Dramas of Fate," no doubt, put Kotzebue to flight; but for thirty years they blocked up the way to anything better. Indeed, even now, the favour bestowed on such unpoetical pieces as Münch-Bellinghausen's "Griseldis" evidences a depraved taste.

The next group that remains to be mentioned after the Romantic School, are the Patriotic poets of 1813, who are intimately allied with Kerner, Uhland, and Schwab. Foremost stands old Arndt, a native of the Island of Rügen, who has written songs which once enraptured and inflamed the hearts of Germany. Occasional songs, such as his "Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland," "Der Gott der Eisen wachsen liess," "Was schmettern die Trompeten? Husaren heraus," have not been equalled since the sixteenth century. Their greatest merit is that they spoke out the best feelings of the time,—a time such as Germany had not seen since the sixteenth century,—with perfect truth and without exaggeration and phrase. Since the ditties on the battle of Pavia, no war ditties have ever

biography of him was published by Hiltzig, 1823. A selection of his works appeared in 1841.



been sung with such heart and soul as his, and so long as the glory and the joy of 1813 are remembered, so long will the memory of the old Bard of Rügen be retained by his countrymen.

Theodor Körner, the poet of the "Leier und Schwert," must next be mentioned. His poems have not the poetic force and truth of Arndt's. They smack of the rhetorical element, which, soon after the war of liberty, pervaded practical life among the youth of Germany. Still in those days they penetrated to the very hearts of his countrymen, and resounded among the ranks of those who were fighting for their fatherland. Such were "Lützow's wilde Jagd," "Männer und Buben," "Der Schwert," and "Die Eisenbraut," which he wrote a few moments before he met his death at Wöbbelin by the bullet of Franz the Musketeer, who still survives.

His dramas are mere copies from Schiller. Still they are not unsuccessful ones, especially "Zriny," which in spite of all its exaggerations, has a fine historic back-ground.

In Max von Schenkendorf's poems there is an infusion of Christian piety, which reminds us of Novalis. His tone is not so much one of exultation in the battle and the victory, as of love for home and fatherland. His song "Von den deutschen Städten," his "Bauernlied," his "Erhebt euch von der Erde, ihr Schläfer aus der Ruh," and above all those to the Empress Maria Ludovica Beatrix of Austria, must ever rank high in the field of poetry.\*

\* Friedrich Gottfried Maximilian von Schenkendorf was born at Tilsit, 11th December, 1784; died at Coblenz, 11th December, 1819.

In his "Geharnischte Sonnetten," Friedrich Rückert struck a key which people were not accustomed to in sonnet-writing. Subsequently, he devoted himself to Oriental studies, which was the latest poetical field of Goethe; and he has here, we must confess, exhibited an incomparable mastery of language, although we may not approve of the choice of the subject.

But his other poems, which are exceedingly numerous, have a life and variety, a tenderness and fervour, and frequently a depth and earnestness, which stamp them as among the most important poetic products of the period.

Of these later poets, Count August Platen is the greatest master of form.\* But his poems are too estranged from German thought, German love and life; too bad-tempered, too cold and smooth, too artificial, ever to become thoroughly popular.

These defects are most frequent and most striking in his sonnets and odes, which, nevertheless, contain great poetic beauties. Still, as a master of poetic forms, of versification and metre, he has not his equal in the language. His poems are among the richest in great thoughts of modern times; while in his dramas, "Der Schatz der Rampsinit," "Die verhängnisvolle Gabel,"

His best poems are in his "Vaterlandslieder," 1815, and his "Nachlass" (posthumous works), 1832. A collected edition of his poems appeared in 1837.

\* Count Platen-Hallermünde was born at Ansbach, 1796. Formerly a Bavarian officer; subsequently studied philosophy and philology, and, after 1826, chiefly resided in Italy. He died at Syracuse, 5th December, 1835. His "Polenlieder" are not given in the collective edition of his works. They were printed in Strasburg, and were at one time much thought of; but they are far behind his other poems.

and "Der romantische Œdipus," he chastises the bad taste of his contemporaries with marvellous power. His other dramas, "Der Gläserne Pantoffel," in which he treats the fairy world almost in the fashion of Tieck, "Der Thurm von sieben Pforten," "Berengar," and "Treue um Treue," are pre-eminent in point of form; but less so in subject-matter and treatment. His last drama, "Die Liga von Cambrai," shows that he had passed his zenith as a writer before the year 1832. It is a mere sketch, full of speeches and devoid of action. Of Platen's other poems, some of his ballads, and his "Eclogues and Idyls," are most likely to endure; while his agreeable and artistic fairy tale "Die Abbasiden," which the poet, singularly enough, considered to be his best work, is a mere play of the phantasy, of very fleeting interest. His best work, "Der romantische Œdipus," is spoilt by the undeserved satire it contains upon the poet Karl Immermann, who died five years after Platen.

Immermann's name will be the last on our list, for his poetical romance, "Münchhausen," is the only one of real artistic value that these times have produced.\*

\* Karl Leberecht Immermann was born at Magdeburg, 1796; died at Düsseldorf, 26th August, 1840. His "Münchhausen," in four volumes is his last complete work. "Tristan und Isolde" was never finished, and is, poetically, of no account. He and Platen are the only writers who have succeeded in treating some phases of the times satirically. The Hofschulze, and other characters in "Münchhausen," indicate a deep and delicate sense for German nature-life on the part of the author.

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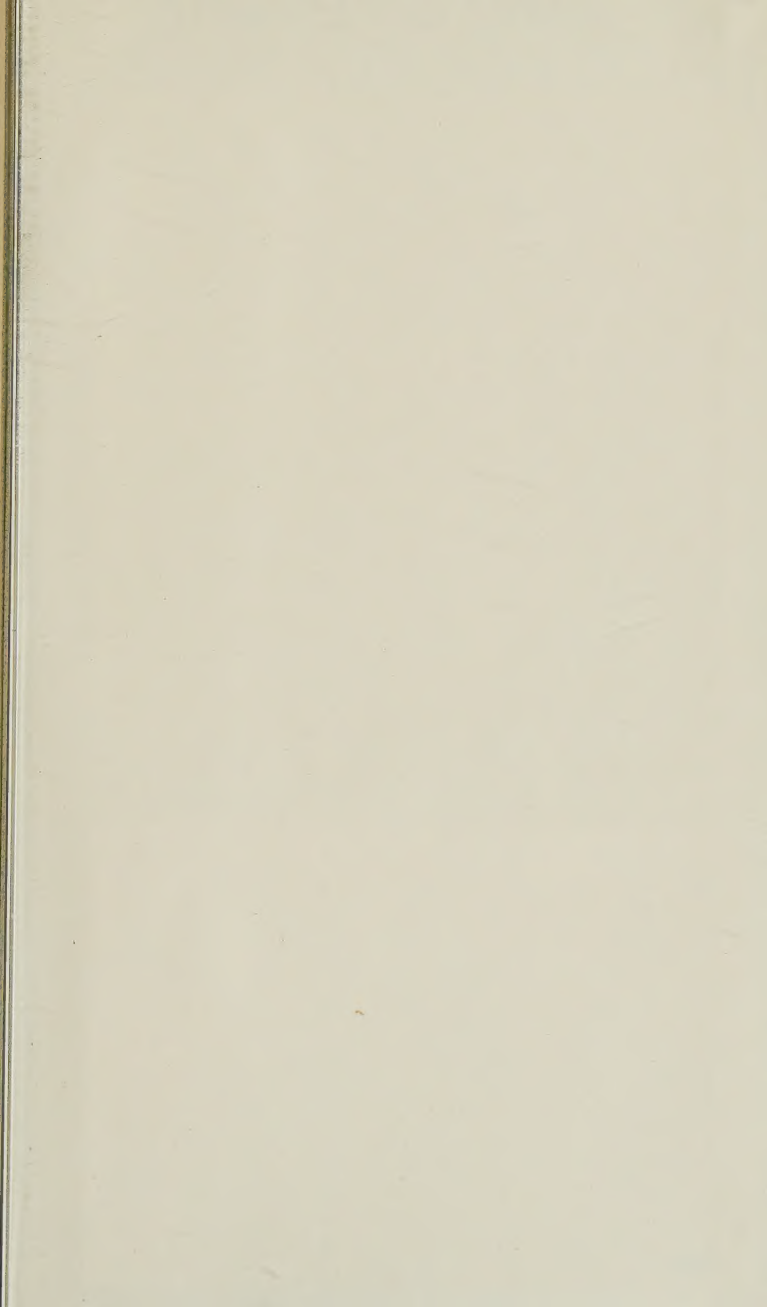
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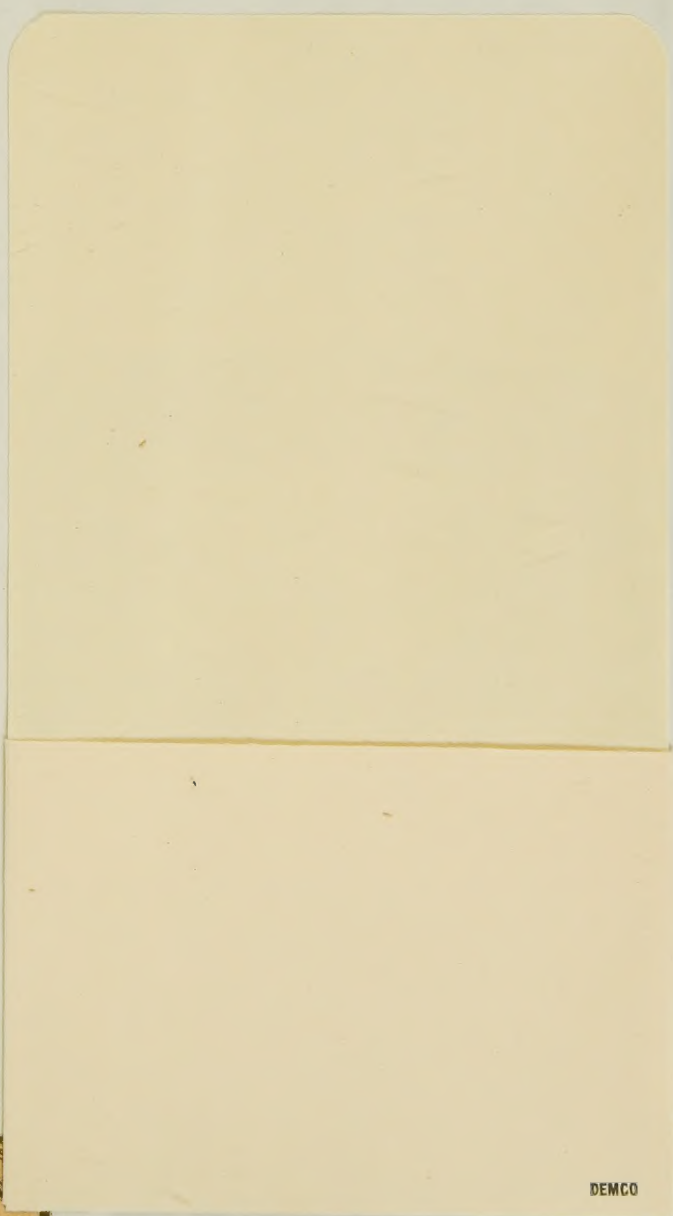
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